



# J&K Govt gears up for budget session

## Directs departments to nominate nodal officers, constitute Question Cells

Directive asks HODs to ensure their staff remains present during entire session

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU, FEBRUARY 20:: In preparation for the upcoming budget session of the Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly scheduled for March 3, 2025, the administration has issued directives to all departments to appoint nodal officers and establish question cells at the departmental level. According to an official order in possession with the news agency—the heads of departments have been instructed to nominate nodal officers and set-up question cells to provide timely and accurate responses during the session. The order also mandates that all government employees remain stationed at their respective



offices throughout the session to ensure smooth proceedings.

"No officer or official shall leave their station without prior approval during the session to ensure the smooth conduct of proceedings," reads the order. It further

stated that administrative secretaries and heads of departments must ensure compliance with these directives.

Reports indicate that 82 out of 90 Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs)

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### CM concludes pre-budget consultation with public representatives

JAMMU, FEBRUARY 20: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah today concluded the pre-budget consultations with public representatives, holding separate meetings with elected representatives from Kishtwar and Doda districts of Jammu division at the Civil Secretariat, Jammu.

Chairing the session for Kishtwar district, the Chief Minister engaged with public representatives, including Leader of Opposition (LoP) Sunil Sharma, who represents Padder-Nagseni in the J&K Assembly, the Chairperson of the District Development Council (DDC) Kishtwar and Members of the Legislative Assembly

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## GoI won't talk to Pakistan till it stops abetting terror: CM Omar Abdullah

Says neighboring country has never stopped meddling in J&K

■ HT NEWS NETWORK



Srinagar, Feb 20 Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah has said that Government of India won't talk to Pakistan till it stops abetting terror.

In an interview with a wire agency, Omar, according to the news agency—said, "It will be foolish for any of us to suggest that what J&K has been witnessing is purely indigenous without any outside assistance what so ever."

Asked is Pakistan still meddling in the region, the Chief Minister said, "I don't think Pakistan has ever stopped meddling in J&K."

He said that the his party National Conference has always tried to take Pakistan on board to address concerns of the Government of India (GoI) so that a friendly working relationship is established. Asked does he see it (working relation with Pak) happening, the J&K Chief Minister said, "I don't see it happening."

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### NEWS BRIEF

#### Soldier injured in mine blast in LoC Poonch

■ HT News Network

Poonch, Feb 20:- A soldier was injured in a mine blast in LoC Tarkundi Poonch district of Jammu division on Thursday evening.

Official sources told news agency that mine blast incident occurred in the Tarkundi in which one soldier got injured. They said the soldier received an injury on his left foot due to a mine blast and he was shifted to Military hospital for medical treatment. Meanwhile police have taken cognizance and started an investigation.

#### Govt School Teacher Dies After Being Hit by Dumper in Budgam

■ HT News Network

Budgam, Feb 20, : A government school teacher lost her life after being hit by a dumper in the Old Town area of Central Kashmir's Budgam district on Thursday, officials said. Eyewitnesses told the news agency that the dumper, bearing registration number HR55AR- 5574, was driven by an unidentified person when it hit the victim. The severely injured woman was

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#### Aggrieved student from GHSS Khanyar allowed to sit in examination

■ HT News Network

Srinagar , FEBRUARY 20: Tayaba Yaqoob, a 10th class student of Higher Secondary School Khanyar today appeared in the examination

Tayaba Yaqoob and her parents thanked the Minister of Education and other officers of the Education Department for timely resolution of her complaint. Education Department: February 20, 2025:-\* Tayyaba Yaqoob, a 10th class student of Higher Secondary School Khanyar, officially appeared for the examination today.

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#### PM Internship scheme (PMIS) once again open for applications with the launch of Round 2 of Pilot Phase

■ HT News Network

Srinagar , FEBRUARY 20: The Prime Minister Internship Scheme (PMIS) is once again open for applications with the launch of Round 2 of the pilot phase. After more than 6 lakh applications in Round 1, Round 2 offers more than 1 lakh+ internship opportunities in top companies across more than 730 districts in India.

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## J&K Police recovers, reunites 743 missing persons with families, reveals official data

■ HT News Network

Jammu, Feb 20 (UNI) Jammu, Feb 20 (UNI) Demonstrating its unwavering commitment to public service Jammu and Kashmir Police have successfully traced and reunited 743 missing persons with their families across District Jammu in

2024. As per the official communique issued by the Jammu and Kashmir Police, stated that Police has brought relief to hundreds of families, reaffirming its dedication to maintaining law and order.

Jammu Police leveraged technological tools, including CCTV surveillance, digital tracking, and intelligence-based investiga-

tions, to swiftly locate missing individuals. Extensive field searches, close coordination with other law enforcement agencies, and active public participation played a crucial role in ensuring the safe return of 743 persons reported missing, it read.

"Public awareness and cooperation have been key factors in these recoveries. Jam-

## Some hostile elements trying to harm Urdu and Kashmiri: Farooq Abdullah

■ HT News Network

Srinagar, Feb 20 (UNI) National Conference President Farooq Abdullah on Thursday said that it is a pity that some hostile elements are trying to harm Urdu and Kashmiri by labeling them as regional or religious languages.

He urged people to resist such efforts and ensure that these languages are passed on to future generations so that they, too, can protect and



erations so that they, too, can protect and

TURN ON.....PAGE 02

## Kashmir Receives Moderate Rain, Gulmarg Records Fresh Snowfall Water level in Jhelum, other streams still below zero level, major highways, roads closed, ; MeT predicts another wet spell from Feb 26

■ HT News Network

Srinagar, Feb 20 (UNI) The higher reaches of Kashmir valley, including the tourist resort of Gulmarg received a fresh snowfall, while plains were lashed by light rains, ending a long dry spell on Thursday, officials said.



The ski resort of Gulmarg in north Kashmir received 7.5 cm of snowfall overnight, the Meteorological Department of Srinagar said. Reports of fresh light to moderate snowfall were also received from Shopian, Sinthan Top, and the Pir Panjal range of mountains

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## Five arrested for ragging Kashmiri student

■ HT News Network

Bengaluru, Feb 20 (UNI) The Karnataka Police have arrested five senior MBBS students of AI-Meen Medical College in Vijayapura for allegedly ragging and assaulting a second-year student from Kashmir, officials said on Wednesday.

The incident reportedly took place on Tuesday following a dispute between students of the 2019 and 2022 MBBS batches during a cricket match. According to police sources, the victim, identified as Hamim Ghulam Bhat, filed a complaint alleging that his seniors forced him to perform humiliating acts, verbally abused him, and later assaulted him in his hostel room. The accused, identified as Mohammed Zainul (23),

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## Major Reshuffle in J&K Police Transfers of DySPs Ordered Across both Regions

■ HT News Network/KNT

Srinagar, Feb 20, : In a major administrative reshuffle, the government has ordered the transfer and posting of several Deputy Superintendents of Police (DSPs) across various divisions of Jammu and Kashmir. The changes have been implemented with immediate effect in the interest of administration.

As per the official order, Basharat Hussain, previ-



ously serving as DSP IRP 11 Bn, has been transferred and posted as SDPO Achabal, while Nisar Ahmad Khan, who was DSP CID SB Poonch, will now serve as DSP HQ Kulgam. Rayes Ahmed Mir has been posted as DSP CID

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## After IAS Officer Posted in J&K His Family Also Booked in Corruption Case

■ HT News Network/KNT

Srinagar, Feb 20, : After filing a case against IAS officer Kumar Rajeev Ranjan, the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) has also booked his family members over allegations of amassing disproportionate assets beyond their legal income, unveiling a suspected network of corruption and misuse of power. Ranjan, a 2010-batch IAS officer currently serving as Secretary of the Labour and Employment Department in Jammu and Kashmir, has been named in the First Information Report (FIR)

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## Engineering Student by Day, Artisan by Passion: Srinagar Youth Turns Wood Waste into Wonder

■ HT News Network/JKNS

Srinagar, Feb 20: In the heart of Khunmoh, Srinagar, 22-year-old multi-talented Mudasar Rashid is redefining the concept of waste by transforming discarded wood into exquisite art pieces. His journey from a novice craftsman to a celebrated artist is a testament to passion and perseverance.

"When I see any waste material, especially wood, I examine it closely," Mudasar told news agency "If I find potential in it, I take it, craft it, and turn it



into art." His keen eye for potential allows him to convert materials worth as little as 10 into creations valued in the thousands.

Mudasar's foray into craftsmanship began serendipitously. "One day, I

was just sitting, watching a craft video. I started copying it, made a piece of art, and gifted it to my friend," he said. This initial success ignited a passion that grew daily.

Starting with a single machine, Mudasar's dedi-

cation has expanded his workshop to include multiple tools. "Alhamdulillah, today I have many, and will get more. I'm working well," he said with gratitude. Each piece he creates is priced based on the effort invested, with some fetching thousands of rupees. "The more you work on your craft, the more it rewards you," he emphasized.

Beyond artistry, Mudasar is multifaceted, an engineering student, technician, craftsman, and bird seller. "Alhamdulillah, I do very well," he remarked.

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## Statehood core issue of all people, BJP disrespecting mandate: Karra

BJP's silence over the core issue is criminal : JKPC Chief

■ HT News Network/JKNS

Jammu, February 20 Stating that statehood is the core issue of people across length & breadth of Jammu & Kashmir, JKPC President Shri Tariq Hameed Karra has accused BJP of disrespecting the overall mandate of people including massive mandate secured by them in Jammu too, in the name of statehood.

Shri Karra also criticised the autocratic & anti democratic mindset of some officers in the administration, even after the coming into being of an elected government for over four months.

Addressing a press conference at PCC HQ today along with working President Raman Bhalla, Chief Spokesperson Mr Ravinder Sharma, Former minister Yogesh



Sawhney, Ved Mahajan, Neeraj Gupta, Shri Tariq Hameed Karra hit out at BJP for disrespecting the mandate of people especially the massive mandate secured by BJP in Jammu on the false promises of restoration of statehood but maintaining criminal silence now. He said that during the ongoing campaign of Congress

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TEACHER

immediately rushed to District Hospital (DH) Budgam, where doctors declared her brought dead. The deceased has been identified as Shaista, wife of Fayaz Ahmad Dar, a resident of Housing Colony Ompora, sources said. Meanwhile, authorities have taken cognizance of the incident, and further investigation has been initiated.

EXAMS

Due to mistake in her name she was not recently allowed to sit in the examination and there were many reports in the media about it.Today, the said student expressed happiness after appearing in the examination and said that she had brought her complaint to the notice of the Director School Education Kashmir. The department took timely action on which I was officially allowed to appear in the examination today.

Meanwhile, the said student and her parents have thanked the Minister of Education, Director School Education Kashmir and the department for taking timely action and addressing her complaint on top priority.

The department has assured the parents that the department will not allow any hindrance to the students education.

WEATHER

in south Kashmir.Snowfall was also reported from the Zojila pass on the Srinagar-Ladakh Highway.Kashmir plains, including Srinagar and its adjoining areas, were lashed by light rainfall ending a long dry spell.Srinagar received 1.2mm of rainfall, Pahalgam 2.2mm, Kupwara 7.4mm, Kokernag 4.2mm and Gulmarg 7.6 mm till 8.30 AM this morning.

Most parts of Jammu division also received light to moderate rainfall. Jammu received 7.9mm, Banihal 14.4mm, Batote 13.8mm, Katra 12.7mm and Bhadarwah 6.0mm rainfall during the past 24 hours.

The MeT office said the weather will generally remain cloudy today with the possibility of light to moderate rain and snow at many places.

The main activity of weather is expected over Jammu region, Chenab Valley and higher reaches of south Kashmir. The plains of Jammu may receive light to moderate rain, thunder with gusty winds at a few places.

The higher reaches of Chenab Valley and south Kashmir may receive moderate snowfall with a depth of 7 to 12 inches, while higher reaches of north and Central Kashmir may experience 4 to 8 inches of snowfall during the period.

The night temperature improved in Srinagar, the summer capital of Jammu and Kashmir, which recorded at 4.4°C and it was 2.9°C above the average during this period of the season.

Srinagar recorded the maximum temperature at 17.4°C on Wednesday, and it was 7.0°C above normal.

The ski resort of Gulmarg remains the coldest place, with the minimum temperature settled at -6.0°C, and this was 3.2°C above the normal, while tourist destination of Pahalgam had a low of minus 2.7°C, and it was 3.9°C above normal for the valley of shepherds, the MeT office said. The plains of Jammu and Kashmir were however lashed by the rains with the details revealing that a rainfall of 8.0 mm was recorded at Sangam station while 6.0 mm rainfall was recorded in Srinagar's Ram Munshi Bagh. Khudwani and Batkoot also recorded a rainfall of 11.0 mm each during the period.

These stations have been witnessing a reduction in the water level for the last some time in wake of the prolonged dry spell and low precipitation for the last three months.

However, the fresh rainfall has not brought any changes in the water level in river Jhelum and other streams with water at majority of the stations continue to flow below zero level.

Notably, the chopper service from Katra to Sanjhi Chat for Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine nestled in Trikuta Hills in Katra town of Reasi district remained suspended due to poor visibility and fog conditions after fresh rainfall.

"Due to rains, the Trikuta Hills are covered by dense fog, due to which the chopper service from Katra to Sanjhi Chat has been suspended," said an official. He said that the pilgrims were trekking either on foot or availing themselves of pithoo/palanquin (palki)/pony service due to suspended chopper service. The chopper service will resume once the weather improves, he added. He, however, said that the Shrine Board staff deployed along the track are guiding pilgrims to remain alert and watchful while performing pilgrimage.

Meanwhile, with rains and snow in upper reaches the temperature also sees drastic shifts. Jammu city recorded 11.9 degrees Celsius minimum temperature, Katra town 9 degrees Celsius, Batote 3.7 degrees Celsius, Banihal 2.4 degrees Celsius and Bhaderwah 4.4 degrees Celsius.

Moreover, the weather is expected to improve from tomorrow, saying that partly cloudy weather is expected from February 21 to 23 while on February 24 & 25, generally cloudy weather with possibility of light rain and snow expected at scattered places.

Director Meteorological department, Dr Mukhtar Ahmad said that from February 26 to 28, there is a possibility of light to moderate rain and snow at many places.

Pertinently, KNO has already reported that

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.

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.

Meanwhile, all the major highways across Kashmir have been blocked following a fresh spell of snowfall and rainfall, including the Jammu-Srinagar National Highway, officials said on Thursday while the authorities said that restoration work has been started to clear the roads.

Officials told KNO that traffic on the Jammu-Srinagar National Highway has been halted from both ends due to slippery road conditions between Banihal and Ramssoo caused by heavy snowfall.

Commuters have been advised to avoid travel on the highway until weather conditions improve and the road is cleared.

Regarding the Srinagar-Sonamarg-Gumri (SSG) Road, officials said that it remains closed due to continuous snowfall. "A decision on resuming vehicular movement on this route will be taken tomorrow after receiving clearance from road maintenance agencies."

Similarly, the Kishtwar-Sinthan-Anantnag Road is closed for vehicular movement as per the Sub-Divisional Magistrate Kokernag's advisory, referenced under endstt. no. SDM/KNK/2024-25/3139-45 dated 16-01-2025.

Officials also said that the Mughal Road remains closed for vehicular movement following the District Magistrate Poonch's order, referenced under endstt. no. DMP/JC/7273-92 dated 18-01-2025, due to snow accumulation.

BUDGET

have submitted nearly 800 questions and 80 private members' bills. The Speaker of the Legislative Assembly had instructed each MLA to submit 20 questions—10 in the starred and 10 in the unstarred categories—along with three private member's bills.

However, certain restrictions have been imposed on asking questions during the session. Written questions related to All India Services, including IAS, police, law and order, and security matters, will not be permitted unless the Speaker allows them under special circumstances. Additionally, debates on issues concerning All India Services will also be excluded.

The last budget session of the J&K Legislative Assembly was held in January-February 2018. The session holds particular significance as it is going to be the first budget session since the collapse of the Mehbooba Mufti-led government in June 2018, following the BJP's withdrawal from its alliance with the PDP. Subsequently, President's and Governor's rule were imposed, leading to the abrogation of Article 370 and the bifurcation of Jammu and Kashmir into two Union Territories—J&K and Ladakh—in August 2019—(KNO)

CM

(MLAs) from the district.

The representatives presented their demands and issues, with the Chief Minister assuring them that their suggestions and inputs would be duly considered in the budget formulation.

In his comments, Chief Minister Omar Abdullah stated that the series of consultations with public representatives from all 20 districts of Jammu and Kashmir had concluded, providing valuable insights into the ground-level issues faced by the people.

"These interactions help us understand the priorities of the people. Since you are directly connected with the public, your inputs and suggestions are crucial for policy-making," the Chief Minister told the elected representatives. Similarly, representatives from Doda district also discussed their development priorities and concerns with the Chief Minister.

Among key issues raised about twin districts, staff shortages in educational institutions and healthcare centers, drinking water supply, road connectivity & widening, construction of tunnels, and improving mobile connectivity in remote areas were put forth.

The Deputy Commissioners of Kishtwar and Doda, in their presentation, provided constituency-wise breakdown of demands prioritized by the MLAs.

The DDC chairpersons and MLAs expressed their gratitude to the Chief Minister for involving them in the budget formulation process, noting that it was the first time such consultations had taken place.

They urged that this participatory approach should continue as a regular feature.

The meeting was attended by Chief Secretary Atal Dulloo, Additional Chief Secretary to the CM Dheeraj Gupta, Principal Secretary Finance Santosh D. Vaidya, Director General Budget M.S. Malik, Director General Expenditure Division-I Sajad Hussain Ganai and other concerned officials.

PAK

Replying to a query whether anytime has he advised the Bharatiya Janata Party led government in New Delhi to hold talks with Pakistan, Omar said, "At the moment I don't see any scope of India holding talks with Pakistan."

"There is no scope when you have sort of

attacks that you have had in J&K over the past few years the way security forces and construction camps have been targeted. It becomes very difficult to tell the GoI that it has to talk."

'EC SHOULD CLARIFY REPORTS ABOUT US SPENDING MONEY ON VOTER TURNOUT IN INDIA'

Meanwhile, reacting to US President Donald Trump questioning the need to spend money on voter turnout in India, Omar told reporters in Jammu that "The Election Commission should clarify its stand on reports that the US spent USD 21 million for voter turnout in India."

Omar said that till now there was no proof of foreign inference but he was quick to add, "The Election Commission has to clarify whether foreign interference has taken place or not."

Pertinently, Donald Trump after taking over as the United States President has been speculating that the money was spent on the voter turnout in India and the erstwhile Biden administration was attempting to "get somebody else elected" in the country—(KNO)

DR FAROOQ

uphold them.

Farooq in a statement on the occasion of Mother Language Day being celebrated on February 21 said that preserving one's language, culture, and heritage is a hallmark of proud and resilient nations.

He emphasized that history bears witness to the fact that nations that forgot their language, culture, and traditions eventually faded into history.

Abdullah stressed that safeguarding all languages spoken in Jammu and Kashmir is essential for preserving the region's unique identity and Kashmiriyat.

Expressing concern, he said it is unfortunate that adversarial elements are trying to harm Urdu and Kashmiri by labelling them as regional or religious languages. He urged people to resist such efforts and ensure that these languages are passed on to future generations so that they, too, can protect and uphold them.

He further stated that every individual must take personal responsibility for preserving all languages spoken across Jammu, Kashmir, and Ladakh, including Urdu.

"To protect our identity, we must sustain our existence, which can only be achieved by keeping our mother languages alive," he said.

He said that the sign of living nations is that they keep trying to keep their civilization, culture, language and culture alive.

RAGGING

Sameer (24), Shaik Sawood (23), Mansoor Bhasha (24), and Muzzaffer alias Mujeeb Jamadar (23), have been booked under relevant sections of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita and the Karnataka Education Act, 1983. They allegedly coerced Bhat into recording an apology video and threatened him with dire consequences if he participated in cricket matches for the next four years, police sources said.

Following Bhat's complaint, the Vijayapura Rural Police launched an investigation and arrested the accused on Wednesday. The five students are currently in police custody, and further legal proceedings are underway.

Meanwhile, the Jammu and Kashmir Students Association (JKSA) has strongly condemned the incident and urged Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah to take strict action. JKSA National Convenor Nasir Khuehami described the incident as "not just ragging but a serious student safety issue and an institutional failure."

"Stronger anti-ragging measures must be enforced, and the accused should face strict legal consequences," Khuehami said, calling for immediate intervention by the Karnataka government and the college administration to ensure the safety of non-local students.

TRANSFAR

gam, has been reassigned as DSPHQ Budgam, and Imtiaz Ahmed has been posted as DSP Security Jammu after his stint as DSP DAR Ramban.

Tahir Amin Sheikh, who was SDPO Chenani, will now serve as DSP DAR Jammu, while Jaswant Singh has been appointed as DSP SOG Anantnag after serving as SDPO Nowshera. In another significant move, Albeena Malik has been posted as DSP CICE Jammu, having previously served as SDPO Railways Jammu.

Further transfers include Sajad Ahmad, who moves from DSP DAR Kishtwar to DSP Traffic Ramban, and Arun Jamwal, who will now serve as SDPO Vijaypur after his tenure at DSP IR-20th Bn. Updesh Kumar has been shifted to SDPO Arnas from DSP SOG Gursai, Poonch, while Kuldeep Kumar takes over as DSP DAR Ramban from DSP Chanderkote, Ramban.

Additionally, Ishfaq Alam has been appointed DSP Traffic Srinagar, and Sahil Mahajan will now be SDPO Nowshera after serving as DSP SOG Jammu. In other key postings, Javid Ahmad Lone has been transferred to DSP SOG Lolab from DSP DAR Shopian, and Vishal Manhas moves to DSP SOG Dessa Kastigarh.

The reshuffle also involves several officers being assigned new responsibilities in traffic, security, and CID wings. The administration has emphasized that these transfers aim to streamline law enforcement and enhance operational efficiency.

Moreover, three IPS officers from the 2021 batch have been instructed to report to SP

Operations, Srinagar, for further duties. Their salary will be drawn from the office of SSP Srinagar until their substantive postings are determined by the government. [KNT]

IAS

registered on February 17. His family members, Kirpa Shankar Roy and Dulari Devi, along with some unidentified persons, are also under investigation.

Notably, the CBI yesterday conducted searches at seven locations, including Ranjan's office in Jammu, and properties linked to him in Varanasi, Srinagar, and Gurugram, as part of the probe.

Previously, Ranjan served as Deputy Commissioner (DC) of Kupwara and was already under scrutiny for his alleged involvement in the Jammu and Kashmir arms licence scam.

Between 2012 and 2016, over 2.78 lakh arms licences were reportedly issued illegally to ineligible persons in exchange for bribes. Authorities estimate the scale of the scam to be over Rs 100 crore.

The CBI has been investigating the scandal since 2019, uncovering evidence that district magistrates, deputy commissioners, and licensing authorities allegedly abused their power for financial gains.

In November last year, the central government approved the prosecution of Ranjan, alongside seven other IAS officers who held crucial administrative posts in Jammu and Kashmir during the period in question.

The latest action against Ranjan and his family sheds light on the depth of corruption within bureaucratic circles and raises fresh concerns over governance and accountability. [KNT]

WOOD

Central to his success is unwavering family support. "My parents support me in everything I do. My father provides whatever I ask for," he said.

He believes that divine support aligns with dedication. "Allah opens doors for those who work with passion. We need to concentrate," he advised. Prioritizing work over distractions, Mudasir said, "Mobile phones give me nothing, but work gives me respect and whatever I need."

Inspired by international artisans who turn scrap into art, Mudasir aspires to similar heights. "I saw a video where someone made a table worth approximately \$49,000 from a wooden slice," he said. "Why can't we?"

Leveraging social media platforms like Facebook and Instagram, Mudasir showcases and sells his creations, which range from clocks and art birds to showpieces and daily-use items. Each piece reflects his commitment to turning trash into treasure. (JKNS)

KARRA

throughout several districts of Jammu province including Udhampur Poonch, Rajouri, Ramban, Doda Kishtwar, there was massive response of the people and statehood remains the core issue of all sections of people.

There is strong resentment amongst people against centre government over the denial of statehood as a result the expectations from government are not getting fulfilled in absence of powers.

The genuine issues of different sections like daily wagers, need based, casual, adhoc & other such temporary, consolidated, adhoc, contractu als NHM, Anganwadi SPOs, data operators and such other sections are awaiting justice. The unemployed youth getting overaged.

He said that it has been observed that some officers in the administration have not changed their mindset from autocratic to democratic set up and have not adopted pro people and pro democratic culture in an elected democracy system as witnessed in Kishtwar district.

The people are threatened to be lodged in jails under PSA for raising their issues of basic amenities of power and water through peaceful mode, which is recognised as democratic right.

The congress party too was denied to hold a outdoor workers meeting and this is unheard of in a democratic and elected government of which we too in coalition. It's the mindset of some officers or they were under instructions from top when they also claim complete normalcy.

He also said that instead listening to the agitating people of chenab region for considering their demand for free or subsidised power supply to them being in vicinity of the numerous power projects, facing numerous hardships and health hazards, the administration is threatening them of putting criminal cases and PSA. Is it the way of dealing with people in a democracy. The government should work out a mechanism with centre too, to evolve some way to help people who are suffering in the region.

He also called for review of the Indus water as the time had come for the same. The people of J&K have suffered the most due to the treaty and should be taken special care.

He said people in the so -called smart cities of Jammu & Srinagar are not getting regular water and are being taxed while putting them in great hardships by Municipal corporate authorities to deposit online money for tanker service, which was free earlier in unsmart city. It's duty of government to provide uninterrupted water and power supply especially in

smart cities for which tax is charged.

The people are being fleeced for power tariff hike, & meters. People in rural areas have been imposed water tax without regular supply of water.

The Jal Jeevan Mission and claims of har gar nul, har ghar jal have yielded no results so far and nul have been installed bit no Jal in most rural areas as revealed by people in most parts.

Karra also expressed concern over the incidents of killings at Billawar in Kathua in recent days and demanded that truth should come out in a time frame. He expressed deep sorrow with the families of victims.

Karra said that "Hamari Riyasat, Humara Haq has become people's slogan - congress will take it to grass roots levels and take to streets if required. (KNS) Poonch, Rajouri, Ramban, Doda Kishtwar, there was massive response of the people and statehood remains the core issue of all sections of people.

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Karra said that "Hamari Riyasat, Humara Haq has become people's slogan - congress will take it to grass roots levels and take to streets if required. (KNS) 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.

PM

More than 300 top companies across sectors including Oil, Gas & Energy; Banking and Financial Services, Travel & Hospitality, Automotive, Metals & Mining Manufacturing & Industrial, Fast-Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) and many more have offered internship opportunities to Indian youth to gain real-world experience, network with professionals and enhance their employability.

Eligible youth can explore and select internships based on their preferred district, state, sector, area and filter internships within a customisable radius from their specified current address. In round 2, each applicant can apply to up to 3 internships until the application deadline.

For round 2, more than 70 IEC events are being conducted across India in districts with maximum number of internship opportunities in colleges, universities ITIs, Rozgar melas etc., based on the kind of qualifications









EDITORIAL

Development works under smart city project begin to come under scanner

The cat is out of the bag and people of Srinagar district now taste the dose of medicine as far as classification of the city as a smart city of India is concerned. Scores of residents of the district have been complaining about the quality of works carried out in the different areas of Srinagar under the Srinagar Smart City Limited. Day in and day out we can see tiles getting off on the roads and pavements where these were laid under the smart city project.

The Anti Corruption Bureau (ACB) has already acted in the matter and some of the officials of Srinagar Smart City Limited. However, most of the people believe that the action taken by ACB is equivalent to the tip of the iceberg with the sharks being left out from such action. There is a general perception among the masses that the big guns involved in the scam would be let off and no action would be taken against them.

Since no quality check about the works carried out under the smart city project was done it has come to the fore that sub-standard material has been found in many developmental works. The contractors who carried out the works were just worried about making more and more money and as such there was a wholesome compromise on the works carried out. At the end of the day it is the common man who suffers and also that the state exchequer is drained.

As some of the officers of ACB were transferred barely a few days after booking the officers in a scam in the smart city project there are people who believe that transfer was punitive in nature and it was not a routine thing. These people say that since the contract of the smart city project was given to top guns the government came under influence following which the investigating officers of ACB were transferred from the bureau and posted somewhere else.

It is imperative that free hand is given to the officers who carry out a probe in any scam and the same holds true with the embezzlement carried out in the Srinagar smart city project. At the same time the funds embezzled should be retrieved from the main contractors so that there is accountability. Once action is taken in this case then the executants of any project would think twice before swindling funds meant for any development work.

MOHD YOUNUS BHAT

Swami Vivekananda once said, “The true test of a man and a woman begins after marriage. It is easy to love in dreams but difficult to love in reality.” This profound statement reflects the essence of marriage as a journey of growth, sacrifice, and shared responsibilities. However, this traditional understanding of marriage is increasingly being questioned, largely due to the influence of modern media narratives.

Raised in a culture that valued marriage as a lifelong commitment, a young couple initially embraced their roles as partners. However, exposure to vicious content and TV series’ portraying marriage as restrictive and outdated planted seeds of doubt in their minds. Watching characters prioritise personal ambitions over family life made them question whether marriage was necessary at all. Over time, these doubts led to growing discontent, and eventually, they chose to part ways, believing that their aspirations were more important than their union.

Marriage has traditionally been more than just a legal or social agreement—it is a sacred bond deeply rooted in cultural and religious traditions. Across various communities, it serves as a foundation for companionship, social stability, and the continuation of family lineage. However, in recent times, this age-old institution has come under scrutiny, with modern media playing a significant role in shaping perceptions.

For example, in Bollywood and Western entertainment, marriage is often depicted as restrictive, burdensome, or even unnecessary. Films and TV shows frequently emphasize personal freedom and career ambitions over familial responsibilities, leading many young individuals to question the relevance of marriage. A striking example is the Netflix series Indian Matchmaking, which sparked debates on whether arranged marriages are outdated, further reinforcing the idea that traditional marital setups are incompatible with modern aspirations.

The impact of such portrayals is evident in shifting societal attitudes. A 2021 study by the Pew Research Centre found that 44% of millennials consider marriage an outdated institution. This belief is often fuelled by narratives that prioritize individualism and personal fulfilment over collective family values.

Men are not masculine

While significant attention is given to the challenges faced by women, the struggles that men endure often go unnoticed. In India, traditional gender roles dictate that men must be the primary financial providers for their families. This societal expectation places immense pressure on them to secure stable employment, support dependents, and ensure financial security, often at the cost of their own mental and emotional well-being.

For instance, in many Indian households, even if both partners

work, the primary responsibility of providing for the family still falls on the man. A young professional in any city, for example, may be expected to take on a high-stress corporate job to meet family obligations, even if he dreams of pursuing a less lucrative but fulfilling career in the arts. This burden can lead to anxiety, depression, and burnout, yet these struggles are rarely acknowledged.

According to the International Labour Organization (2022), men still account for 76% of the global workforce, highlighting the disproportionate responsibility they bear. Despite this, media narratives often portray men as privileged or emotionally detached, ignoring the sacrifices they make. Popular culture frequently reinforces the stereotype of the “strong, unbreakable man,” discouraging men from expressing vulnerability or seeking support. Movies and TV shows often depict men as either successful, career-driven individuals or irresponsible figures who fail to meet expectations, leaving little room for nuance.

Moreover, societal expectations extend beyond financial pressures. In the event of a divorce, men often face significant challenges regarding child custody and emotional well-being. Courts tend to favour mothers in custody battles, assuming that men are less capable caregivers. Additionally, legal frameworks such as Section 498A of the Indian Penal Code, originally designed to protect women from dowry harassment, have been misused in some cases, leading to false accusations and legal troubles for men.

Despite these hardships, men are often discouraged from voicing their struggles due to the stigma associated with male vulnerability. Mental health issues among men frequently go unaddressed, as seeking help is often perceived as a sign of weakness. A survey by the National Mental Health Survey of India (2016) found that men are less likely than women to seek psychological support, further exacerbating their struggles.

Selective Media Narratives

Media often thrives on controversy, portraying women as perpetual victims while overlooking the systemic challenges men face. This selective representation fuels a one-sided discourse, where the struggles of men—whether in family law, workplace rights, or mental health—are largely ignored.

Dr Warren Farrell, author of The Boy Crisis (2018), sheds light on how legal and social structures have evolved to favour women, often leaving men vulnerable. A striking example of this bias is evident in child custody battles. Studies indicate that in Western countries, mothers are awarded custody in 85% of cases, despite research suggesting that children benefit from having both parents actively involved in their upbringing (Journal of Family Psychology, 2021). However, such statistics are rarely highlighted in mainstream media, as they challenge the dominant victimhood narrative.

Consider the case of Indian actor Nawazuddin Siddiqui, who faced a prolonged and public custody battle with his estranged wife. Despite his claims of being a responsible father, legal and societal biases largely favoured the mother, reinforcing the notion that fathers are secondary caregivers. Similarly, in the U.S., actor Brad Pitt’s custody battle with Angelina Jolie saw him struggling to gain equal parental rights, despite no legal findings of unfit parenting. These cases reflect a broader pattern where men must fight harder to remain active participants in their children’s lives.

Beyond family law, workplace rights also reflect gendered disparities. Laws against workplace harassment, such as India’s Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace Act (2013), rightfully protect female employees. However, there is no equivalent legal protection for male victims, despite studies showing that men, too, experience harassment but fear speaking out due to societal stigma. In corporate settings, initiatives promoting gender diversity often prioritize women, sometimes leading to reverse discrimination where men feel sidelined for promotions or leadership roles.

Anti-Men Bias -A Silent Crisis

Legal systems worldwide have introduced laws intended to protect women, but in many cases, these laws disproportionately favour them, often leading to injustice against men. This growing bias has resulted in wrongful arrests, ruined reputations, and severe emotional and financial distress for innocent individuals. However, mainstream media and policymakers rarely address these issues, allowing the crisis to persist unnoticed.

One of the most prominent examples is the misuse of Section 498A of the Indian Penal Code (IPC)—a law designed to protect women from dowry harassment. Over the years, this provision has been exploited, leading to thousands of false cases. According to the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) 2020, nearly 80% of cases filed under Section 498A were found to be baseless or lacked sufficient evidence, resulting in acquittals. Even the Supreme Court of India acknowledged in 2014 that this law was being misused, yet wrongful arrests and prolonged legal battles continue to devastate many innocent men. The bias extends beyond dowry laws to divorce and child custody cases, where courts overwhelmingly favour mothers.

False accusations of workplace harassment have also emerged as a major issue. In 2018, Subir Mehta, a senior executive in a multinational corporation, took his own life after being falsely accused of misconduct. Despite no substantial evidence, he was forced to resign, faced social backlash, and ultimately succumbed to the pressure. Cases like this highlight the devastating consequences of wrongful allegations, yet media narratives often overlook them.

The #MeToo movement, while

crucial in exposing real cases of abuse, also saw instances where innocent men were falsely accused. A study by the National Sexual Violence Resource Centre (NSVRC) found that 2% to 10% of reported sexual assault cases are false, yet such instances rarely receive the same level of media scrutiny as genuine cases.

Selling Controversy for Profit

The entertainment industry and social media influencers wield immense power in shaping public opinion, often promoting content that challenges or outright undermines traditional values. With financial incentives and social clout at stake, many celebrities advocate for ideologies that prioritize individualism, materialism, and personal gratification over cultural and family values. This has contributed to a growing disillusionment with traditional gender roles, marriage, and family structures.

A 2023 report by the Media Research Centre found that 72% of top-grossing films and TV shows actively push narratives that conflict with family traditions. For example, Bollywood films that once glorified sacrifice, commitment, and familial duty now increasingly celebrate themes of personal freedom, extramarital affairs, and rebellion against cultural norms. Movies like Gehraiyaan (2022) depict infidelity as a form of self-discovery rather than a betrayal, subtly influencing younger audiences to question the sanctity of long-term commitments. Similarly, Hollywood productions like Don’t Look Up and Euphoria glamorize a hedonistic lifestyle, reinforcing the idea that traditional values are restrictive rather than stabilizing forces in society.

Beyond films, social media influencers amplify these narratives, often packaging controversial opinions as “progressive” or “modern.” Influencers on platforms like Instagram and TikTok promote self-indulgence, instant gratification, and non-traditional relationship dynamics, making these ideas seem aspirational. For instance, Andrew Tate, a polarizing social media figure, gained popularity by promoting extreme views on masculinity, wealth, and relationships, reinforcing hyper-individualistic ideologies among young men. On the other hand, influencers promoting radical feminism often depict traditional family structures as oppressive, creating a growing divide between genders rather than fostering mutual understanding.

Moreover, the glorification of materialism and individualism in pop culture has contributed to dissatisfaction with traditional gender roles. Many social media personalities promote luxury lifestyles and “hustle culture,” making financial success and self-interest appear more desirable than familial bonds and collective well-being. This shift has led to an increase in delayed marriages, declining birth rates, and rising divorce rates, as more people prioritize career aspirations and personal freedoms over long-term commitment.

Restoring Truth in Gender Narratives

Indian traditions have long provided a balanced and complementary approach to gender roles, recognizing the unique strengths, responsibilities, and contributions of both men and women. Rather than promoting competition, cultural teachings emphasize mutual respect, cooperation, and harmony within family and society. However, modern narratives, often shaped by external influences and misinterpretations, have distorted these traditional principles, leading to a growing divide between the sexes.

Historically, Indian philosophy and scriptures have depicted both genders as integral to societal stability. Ancient texts like the Manusmriti and Rig Veda highlight the role of women as scholars (brahmavadinis), warriors, and nurturers, while men were seen as protectors and providers. The concept of Ardhnanarishvara, depicting Lord Shiva as half-male and half-female, symbolizes the inherent balance between masculine and feminine energies. Despite such profound teachings, colonial influences, Western feminism, and media distortions have led to an incomplete and often misleading representation of gender roles in India.

For example, modern discourse often equates tradition with oppression, ignoring historical instances where women held power and autonomy. Figures like Rani Lakshmi Bai, Gargi, and Maitreyi exemplify how Indian culture did not restrict women but instead provided avenues for leadership and intellectual growth. Similarly, traditional masculinity in India was never about domination but about responsibility, sacrifice, and duty—qualities that are now increasingly dismissed or ridiculed in mainstream media.

Final thoughts

The media’s distortion of gender roles and family values has led to widespread confusion, particularly among younger generations. Instead of succumbing to biased narratives, society must actively promote authentic knowledge based on history, tradition, and facts. Men and women must be encouraged to embrace their natural roles with dignity and mutual respect, rather than viewing them through a lens of rivalry.

The responsibility of restoring balance lies with scholars, educators, and individuals who must challenge misinformation and uphold family values. If we fail to act, the very foundation of our social and cultural beliefs will continue to erode, leading to increased division and instability.

Only through awareness, education, and active engagement can we counter the misleading narratives that threaten our traditions, our families, and our collective future.

The writer is a Senior Research Scholar, CSIR-NET, DST-INSPIRE fellow & Gold Medalist, School of Physical, Chemical & Applied Sciences (SPCAS), Pondicherry University.

Trump’s Gaza Plan: A Green Light For Ethnic Cleansing?

RAMZY BAROUD

Let’s be clear: the forced displacement of Palestinians is not a new idea. US President Donald Trump’s latest proposal to take “long-term ownership” of Gaza, to “clean out” the “mess”, and to turn it into a “Riviera of the Middle East” is just the latest iteration of efforts aimed at ethnically cleansing Palestinians from their homeland.

What makes Trump’s comments dangerous is not the immediate threat of US military intervention in Gaza followed by the expulsion of its 2.2 million residents. The real danger lies elsewhere.

First, Israel may interpret Trump’s words as a green light to push Palestinians out of Gaza or the West Bank. Second, the US could tacitly endorse another Israeli offensive under the guise of fulfilling the president’s wishes. Third, Trump’s remarks suggest his foreign policy on Palestine will remain largely unchanged from his predecessor’s.

Some Democrats have seized this moment to criticize Arab and Pal-

estinian Americans who voted for Trump or abstained from supporting Democratic presidential nominee Kamala Harris in the last elections. However, the idea of ethnic cleansing was already being floated during the Biden administration.

While then-Secretary of State Antony Blinken reiterated that “Palestinian civilians... must not be pressed to leave Gaza,” Biden created the conditions for displacement through unconditional military support for Israel. This allowed one of the most devastating wars in modern Middle Eastern history to unfold. Just days into the war, on October 13, 2023, Jordan’s King Abdullah II warned Blinken in Amman against any Israeli attempt to “forcibly displace Palestinians from all Palestinian territories or cause their internal displacement.”

The latter displacement became a reality as most of northern Gaza’s population was crammed into overcrowded refugee encampments in central and southern Gaza, where conditions have been and remain inhumane for over 16 months.

At the same time, another displacement campaign is underway in the West Bank, particularly in its northern regions, accelerating in recent weeks. Thousands of Palestinian families have already been displaced in the Jenin governorate and other areas.

Despite this, the Biden administration has done little to pressure Israel to stop.

Arab concerns over Palestinian expulsion were real from the war’s outset. Almost every Arab leader raised the alarm, often repeatedly.

Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi addressed the issue multiple times, warning of Israeli efforts—and possibly US involvement—in a “population transfer” scheme.

“What is happening now in Gaza is an attempt to force civilian residents to seek refuge and migrate to Egypt,” Sisi stated, insisting that such an outcome “should not be accepted.”

Fifteen months later, under Trump, he repeated his rejection, vowing that Egypt would not participate in this “act of injustice.”

The Saudi statement was issued

almost immediately after Trump doubled down on the idea during a joint press conference with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on February 4. The Saudi foreign ministry went further than rejecting Trump’s ‘ownership’ of Gaza but articulated a political discourse that summarized Riyadh’s, in fact, the Arab League’s position on Palestine.

“The Ministry of Foreign Affairs affirms that the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia’s position on the establishment of a Palestinian state is firm and unwavering,” the statement said, adding that the Kingdom “also reaffirms its unequivocal rejection of any infringement on the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people, whether through Israeli settlement policies, land annexation, or attempts to displace the Palestinian people from their land”.

The new US administration, however, seems oblivious to Palestinian history. Given the mass displacement of Palestinians in 1948, no Arab government—let alone the Palestinian leadership—would support another Israeli-US effort to ethnically cleanse

millions into neighboring states.

Beyond the immorality of expelling an indigenous population, history has shown that such actions destabilize the region for generations. The 1948 Nakba, which saw the ethnic cleansing of Palestine, ignited the Arab-Israeli conflict, whose repercussions continue today.

History also teaches us that the Nakba was not an isolated event. Israel has repeatedly attempted ethnic cleansing, starting with its intense attacks on Palestinian refugee camps in Gaza in the early 1950s, and ever since.

The 1967 war, known as the Naksa or “Setback,” led to the ethnic cleansing of hundreds of thousands of Palestinians, both internally and externally. In the years that followed, various US-Israeli initiatives throughout the 1970s sought to relocate the Palestinian population to the Sinai desert. However, these efforts failed due to the steadfastness and collective resistance of the people of Gaza.

Trump’s so-called ‘humanitarian’ ethnic cleansing proposal will similarly go down in history as another

failed attempt, particularly as Arab and international solidarity with the steadfast Palestinian people is stronger than it has been in years.

The key question now is whether Arabs and other supporters of Palestine worldwide will go beyond merely rejecting such sinister proposals and take the initiative to push for the restoration of the Palestinian homeland. This requires a justice-based international campaign, rooted in international law and driven by the aspirations of the Palestinian people themselves.

- Dr. Ramzy Baroud is a journalist, author and the Editor of The Palestine Chronicle. He is the author of six books. His latest book, co-edited with Ilan Pappé, is ‘Our Vision for Liberation: Engaged Palestinian Leaders and Intellectuals Speak Out’. His other books include ‘My Father was a Freedom Fighter’ and ‘The Last Earth’. Baroud is a Non-resident Senior Research Fellow at the Center for Islam and Global Affairs (CIGA). His website is www.ramzybaroud.net



## Ultrasound use in veterinary practice

DR. ANWAR HUSSAIN  
NAGOO

Ultrasound has become an integral component of veterinary practice due to its non-invasive nature and ability to provide real-time diagnostic information across various medical fields within veterinary medicine. Its applications continue to expand as technology advances and more veterinarians adopt this valuable tool for better patient care.

Ultrasound provides significant advancements in the assessment and monitoring of various physiological and pathological conditions across different animal species. Its applications span from companion animals to livestock and wildlife, making it an indispensable part of modern veterinary practices.

**Principles**  
Ultrasoundography utilizes high-frequency sound waves, typically ranging from 1.5 to 18 megahertz (MHz), to create images of internal structures within the body.

The most common Imaging format used is B-mode grayscale scanning, which provides detailed images of soft tissue structures.

**Procedure Overview**  
The typical Veterinary ultrasound procedure lasts between 10-30 minutes. Depending on the specific needs of the pet or Large animal and the area being examined, sedation may be recommended for comfort. Before the procedure, owners may be advised to withhold food from their animal for several hours if abdominal organs are being studied.

Applications in Veterinary Medicine

**Reproductive Health:** Ultrasound plays a crucial role in reproductive diagnostics and management. It is extensively used for pregnancy diagnosis in various species, including dogs, cats, cows, and horses.

**Internal Medicine:** In internal medicine, ultrasound aids in diagnosing conditions affecting abdominal organs such as the liver, kidneys, spleen, and gastrointestinal tract. It helps identify issues like gallbladder mucocele or bile leakage by visualizing

abnormal fluid collections or organ morphology.

**Surgery:** Preoperative evaluations often involve ultrasonographic assessments to guide surgical interventions effectively.

**Cardiology:** Cardiac ultrasonography is essential for evaluating heart function and structure in animals. Doppler ultrasonography can assess blood flow dynamics within the heart and major vessels,

**Musculoskeletal System:** Ultrasonography is also valuable for examining soft tissue injuries in joints and muscles without exposing animals to ionizing radiation.

**Limitations**  
Despite its advantages, ultrasonography has certain limitations that practitioners must consider:

**Depth Penetration:** Most ultrasound machines can effectively image tissues up to approximately 30 cm deep; however, beyond this depth, image quality may deteriorate due to noise interference.

**Gas Interference:** Gas-filled structures like intestines can obstruct sound waves from reaching deeper tissues or organs behind them.

**Operator Dependency:** The quality of ultrasound imaging heavily relies on the operator's skill and experience; thus training is essential for accurate interpretation.

**Current Scenario**

Several veterinary Hospitals Research institutes and private clinics across India are now equipped with advanced ultrasound machines. For instance, Max Vets Animal Hospital in Greater Kailash, South Delhi, was one of the first private institutions in India to offer ultrasound services specifically for small animals. USG facilities for Veterinary practice were introduced in Kashmir by the Surgery and Radiology Department of Veterinary College at Shuhama Kashmir and currently, it is being offered at most of the District Veterinary Hospitals run by the Animal Husbandry Department of J&K Government after getting mandatory PNDT clearance from concerned authorities.

(Dr. Anwar Hussain Nagoo is a Veterinary Surgeon and Radiologist at AHD, J&K government)

# The Greatest Salesman in the World by OG Mandino

## Book Review

FIRDOUS AHMAD MALIK  
REVIEWER

Overview of the book

Book title: The Greatest Salesman in the World  
Author: OG Mandino  
Year of publication: 2008 (Recent Edition)  
Place of publication: Random House, USA  
Publisher: Bantam Books edition  
Number of Pages: 140  
Prince: 246 (In India)  
Book: 200  
Print ISBN: 978-0-553-27757-0  
Online ISBN: 978-0-307-78090-4  
Audio Book: <https://TheGreatestSalesmanintheWorldbyOGMandino.readbyMarkBramhall.PRH.Audiobook.com>

### Introduction to Author

OG Mandino (1923-1996) was an American author best known for his inspirational and self-help books. Before becoming a renowned writer, Mandino faced numerous struggles, including alcoholism and financial ruin, which nearly led him to take his own life. However, a chance encounter with self-help literature transformed his outlook, inspiring him to change his life and share his wisdom with others. His most famous work, The Greatest Salesman in the World, has sold millions of copies worldwide and remains a cornerstone in personal development literature. Mandion's writing blends motivational storytelling with practical philosophy, encouraging readers to cultivate discipline, perseverance, and positive habits. His books, including The Greatest Secret in the World and The Choice, continue to influence readers seeking personal and professional success. Through his work, Mandino left behind that anyone can transform their life with the right mindset.

### Introduction to the Book

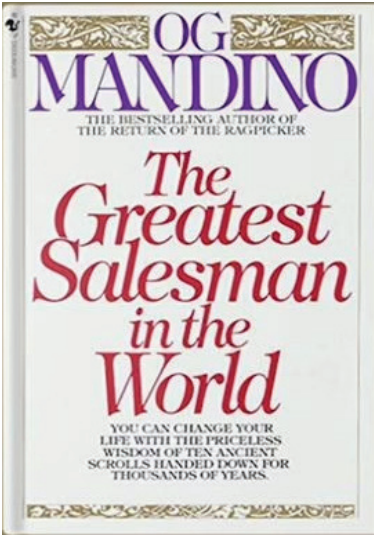
The Greatest Salesman in the

World by Og Mandino is a timeless self-help book that blends storytelling with powerful life lessons. First published in 1968, the book is more than just a guide for salespeople—it offers wisdom on success, perseverance, and personal growth that applies to all aspects of life. Set in ancient times, the story follows Hafid, a poor camel boy who aspires to become a great salesman. His mentor, pathros, entrusts him with ten sacred scrolls, each containing a fundamental principle for achieving success.

The book teaches that greatness is achieved through positive habits, self-discipline, love, and persistence. Each scroll presents a lesson that guides readers toward developing a winning mindset and a purposeful life. Written in a simple yet profound manner, The Greatest Salesman in the World continues to inspire millions, making it a must-read for anyone seeking motivation and personal transformation.

### Motives behind Writing the Book

Og Mandino wrote The Greatest Salesman in the World to inspire individuals to cultivate success through discipline, perseverance, and positive habits. Having overcome personal struggles, including alcoholism and despair, Mandino wanted to share self-improvement and faith. The book is not just about sales but about developing strong character, resilience, and a purposeful approach to life. Through the story of Hafid and the Ten Scrolls, Mandino presents timeless principles that guide readers toward success in any field. His primary motive was to instill hope, encourage personal growth, and show that greatness is achieved through consistent effort and a positive mindset. He also sought to merge spirituality with practical wisdom, helping readers realize that success is not merely finan-



cial but also about love, service, and inner fulfillment. Ultimately, Mandino aimed to leave a lasting impact by providing a roadmap for achieving both material and spiritual success.

### Overview of the Contents

Og Mandion's The Greatest Salesman in the World is a unique self-help book that presents essential principles of success through an engaging fictional narrative. The story follows Hafid, a poor Camel boy in ancient times who dreams of becoming a great salesman. His mentor, Pathros, entrusts him with ten 8-acred scrolls, each containing a timeless lesson on personal and professional growth (Mandino, 1968, P. 23). These scrolls serve as the foundation of the book, emphasizing that success is not just about selling but about developing character, discipline, and resilience.

The first scroll teaches the importance of habits, stating, "I will form good habits and become their Slave" (P.41). The second highlights the power of love, urging, "I will greet this day with love in my heart" (P.55). The third scroll focuses on persistence, reinforcing the idea that setbacks are temporary: "I will persist until I succeed" (P. 67). The fourth emphasizes the value of self-awareness and

controlling emotions, while the fifth teaches the importance of time management (P.78). The sixth scroll encourages action, stating, "Today, I will act" (P. 91)., and the seventh promotes laughter and maintaining a positive outlook (P.102). The eighth scroll reinforces self-worth and confidence, while the ninth discusses the importance of taking risks and embracing one's destiny (P.112). Finally, the tenth scroll instills faith and reminds readers to trust in a higher purpose (P 119).

Mandion's book goes beyond traditional sales techniques, emphasizing personal transformation as the key to success. By following the lessons of the Ten Scrolls, readers are encouraged to develop a disciplined mindset, a compassionate heart, and an unwavering commitment to their goals. Each scroll is meant to be read daily for 30 days to ensure deep internalization, making the book a practical and lifelong guide to success (P.125). The Greatest Salesman in the World remains as enduring classic, inspiring readers to achieve greatness in all aspects of life, not just in business (P.132).

### Criticism of the Book

While The Greatest Salesman in the World is widely praised for its motivational message, it is not without criticism. Some readers find the book's narrative overly simplistic and idealistic; arguing that it lacks practical sales techniques and focuses too much on personal philosophy rather than concrete business strategies. The repetitive nature of the scrolls, which must be read daily for 30 days, may feel tedious to some, making the book's structure seem rigid and time-consuming. Additionally, the book's emphasis on faith and spirituality might not resonate with all audiences, particularly those seeking a more secular or data-driven approach to success. Critics also point out that the book's

principles, while valuable, are not groundbreaking and can be found in other self-help literature. Despite these criticisms, Mandion's work remains influential, offering timeless wisdom on persistence, discipline, and self-improvement, even if it may not appeal to everyone's tastes or practical needs.

### Counterarguments

Despite criticism, The Greatest Salesman in the World remains highly influential due to its timeless wisdom and universal principles. While some argue that it lacks specific sales techniques, Mandion's focus on personal development underscores the idea that success begins with mindset and discipline (Mandino, 1968, P.41). The repetition of the scrolls, rather than begin tediously, reinforces habit formation, a key element of success (P.78). Additionally, while the book incorporates faith, its principles can be applied universally, regardless of the religious beliefs (P.112). Rather than begin outdated, its lessons on persistence, love, and action remain relevant across industries and professions.

### Conclusion

I suggest reading The Greatest Salesman in the World because it offers timeless wisdom that goes beyond sales, guiding readers toward personal growth and success. Og Mandion's ten scrolls provide practical lessons on discipline, persistence, and positive thinking, which can be applied in all aspects of life. While some may find its repetitive structure challenging, this method helps reinforce powerful habits. The book's inspirational storytelling and simple yet profound principles make it a valuable read for anyone seeking motivation and self-improvement. Whether for business or personal development, this book is a great tool for achieving lasting success.

The writer is pursuing an MEd at the University of Kashmir (artistmalik61@gmail.com)

## Patwar Association elections in J&K: A chance to revive a vital system

MOHD AMIN MIR

This article provides a detailed history and analysis of the Patwar system and the responsibilities of the Patwar Association in Jammu & Kashmir. It highlights the evolution of the system from Sher Shah Suri's era, its enhancement under Akbar the Great, and its continuation during British rule with some modifications.

Origin and Evolution of the Patwar System

Introduced by Sher Shah Suri and improved by Akbar

Continued by the East

India Company and British administration with reforms

Known as Talati in South India and Patwari in Punjab, Haryana, Telangana, and Jammu & Kashmir

Initially responsible for maintaining land records, monitoring agricultural activity, collecting taxes, and recording changes in land ownership.

Responsibilities of the Patwar Association

The Patwar Association was formed to protect the rights of Patwaris and address their grievances. While it has played a key

role in the past, its effectiveness has diminished in recent years.

Key Responsibilities

Collective Bargaining & Negotiations

Represents Patwaris in negotiations with the government regarding wages, promotions, and working conditions

Must draft proposals and conduct research before engaging with policymakers

Addressing Grievances & Promotions

Ensures that all Patwaris, including those from older districts, receive fair promotions (e.g., addressing

disparities in Anantnag and Baramulla)

Should push for divisional-level promotion lists for better career growth

Consultation with Government & Policy Advocacy

Needs to work closely with lawmakers, lawyers, and policymakers to improve revenue-related policies

Should act as a bridge between the government and the field staff

Challenges in Digitization of Land Records

During the digitization of Jamabandis (land records), Patwaris invested time and

money, but the association failed to ensure proper verification by Girdawars and Naib Tehsildars.

The association did not advocate for an extended time period for verification, causing challenges in the accuracy of digitized records.

Upcoming Patwar Association Elections & Expectations

Elections for the new Patwar Association leadership in J&K are scheduled for February 15 in Jammu.

The new leadership must work towards uniting the fraternity across both divi-

sions.

It should consult experts and actively engage with the government to enhance work culture and policy-making.

### Conclusion

The Patwar system remains a crucial part of land administration, and the Patwar Association has a responsibility to safeguard the interests of its members. The upcoming elections present an opportunity to revive its credibility, push for fair promotions, and play a more active role in revenue policy reforms.

miramini354@gmail.com

# Kashmir's water scenario: Let's not fake naivety!

AYAZ AHMAD

Kashmir, often referred to as 'Paradise on Earth' is facing an environmental crisis that threatens its natural beauty and sustainability. Signs of drought-like conditions are becoming increasingly evident, with Achabal Spring drying up, water levels in the Chenab River declining, and the depletion of Kashmir's wetlands. These alarming changes indicate a growing water crisis that could have severe consequences for agriculture, drinking water supply, biodiversity, and the region's overall ecological balance.

While climate change is a significant factor, human activities such as deforestation, urban expansion, excessive groundwater extraction, and poor water

management have further accelerated the depletion of water resources. If immediate policy measures are not implemented, Kashmir could face a severe water crisis, impacting both livelihoods and the fragile ecosystem. This article explores the causes behind these water shortages and emphasizes the need for urgent policy interventions to prevent a full-fledged environmental disaster.

One of the primary factors contributing to the drying of Kashmir's water bodies is climate change. Over the past few decades, global warming has altered weather patterns, leading to reduced snowfall and precipitation. Since Kashmir's water sources largely depend on glacier-fed rivers and natural springs, a decrease in snowfall

results in lower water availability during summer.

Studies indicate that rising temperatures are causing glaciers to melt at an accelerated rate. However, instead of replenishing rivers and springs, this rapid melting leads to flash floods followed by long-term water shortages as glacial reserves continue to deplete.

Achabal Spring, a significant freshwater source in Kashmir, is gradually drying up. Historically, this spring has provided a steady supply of drinking water and irrigation support to surrounding areas. However, declining rainfall, groundwater depletion, and climate shifts have led to a significant reduction in its water levels.

Similarly, the Chenab River, a crucial water source for the region, is

experiencing declining water levels. The excessive diversion of water for hydroelectric projects and irrigation, along with deforestation in catchment areas, has disrupted the river's natural flow. Reduced forest cover has weakened the land's ability to retain water, leading to lower groundwater recharge and increased runoff.

Kashmir's wetlands, including Hokersar, Wular, and Shallahugh, play a crucial role in maintaining ecological balance by storing excess rainwater, recharging groundwater, and preventing floods. However, rapid urbanization, pollution, and encroachments have led to their degradation.

The loss of wetlands not only reduces water availability but also threatens biodiversity, as these eco-

systems serve as habitats for migratory birds and aquatic species. Without urgent conservation efforts, Kashmir's wetlands could disappear, exacerbating the region's water crisis.

Unplanned urban expansion in Kashmir has led to over-extraction of groundwater to meet rising demands for drinking water and irrigation. The increasing use of borewells and tube wells has significantly reduced underground water reserves, affecting natural springs and streams.

Additionally, the proliferation of concrete infrastructure has prevented rainwater from percolating into the soil, reducing groundwater recharge. The absence of strict land-use policies has allowed unchecked construction

activities to encroach upon crucial water recharge zones.

Forests play a vital role in maintaining water cycles and preventing soil erosion. However, large-scale deforestation for construction, agriculture, and timber trade has severely impacted Kashmir's water retention capacity. Without adequate tree cover, rainwater runs off quickly instead of seeping into the ground, leading to lower groundwater levels and drier riverbeds.

Despite clear signs of water depletion, Kashmir lacks a comprehensive water conservation policy. Inefficient irrigation techniques, unregulated water usage, the absence of rainwater harvesting, and weak enforcement of environmental regulations have further worsened the

crisis.

Illegal sand mining from riverbeds has also disrupted the natural flow of water, affecting river stability. Without immediate corrective measures, the region could face severe and irreversible water shortages.

We urgently need to develop a Sustainable Water Conservation Strategy. To mitigate the water crisis, the government must implement a well-structured water conservation policy that includes rainwater harvesting in urban and rural areas to reduce dependency on underground water. Regulated groundwater extraction is also necessary to prevent depletion of natural springs and streams.

We must also introduce efficient irrigation techniques such as drip irriga-

tion, to minimize agricultural water wastage. Strict monitoring of hydroelectric projects is important to ensure they do not excessively divert river water.

It is beyond any doubt that immediate action is required to protect and restore Kashmir's wetlands. Strict enforcement of land-use laws must come in place to prevent illegal encroachments while as pollution control measures to prevent household and industrial waste from contaminating water bodies is also a must. However, reintroduction of native plant species is one of the key factors to improve water retention and biodiversity besides ensuring community participation in wetland conservation.

(The author can be reached at ahmadayaz08@gmail.com)







## Sakeena Itoo inaugurates Cath Lab, new block in MMABM Associated Hospital, GMC Anantnag GMC Anantnag becomes first among newly established GMCs to get its dedicated Cath Lab

■ HT News Network

ANANTNAG, FEBRUARY 20: Minister for Health and Medical Education, Social Welfare and Education, Sakeena Itoo, inaugurated Catheterization Laboratory (Cath-Lab) and newly constructed Block-A of Mirza Mohammad Afzal Beigh Memorial (MMABM) Associated Hospital, GMC Anantnag, here today.

MLAs of district Anantnag including Abdul Majeed Bhat; Peerzada Mohammad Syeed; Reyaz Ahmad Khan; Altaf Ahmad Wani and Zafar Ali Khatana besides Principal GMC Anantnag, Professor Dr Rukhsana Najeeb; Director Coordination New Medical Colleges; Director Family

Welfare, MCH and Immunisation; CMO Anantnag; Medical Superintendent MMABM Associated Hospital; Heads of various departments of GMC Anantnag; officers from health and medical education and other concerned departments were also present on the occasion.

While dedicating the Cath-Lab and Block A of GMC Anantnag to the public, the Minister remarked that this significant development marks a new era in the healthcare services across South Kashmir, as GMC Anantnag becomes first among newly established Medical Colleges to get its dedicated Cath-Lab. "With inauguration of Cath-Lab, people of South Kashmir will get the best possible medical care services close to their



doorsteps, especially in terms of cardiac care", she stated. The Minister highlighted that Omar Abdullah led government is committed to provide world class healthcare facilities to the public near their doorsteps. "Present Government is determined to establish world class medical infrastructure in J&K besides removing certain shortcomings in the health sector", Sakeena maintained. The Minister added that healthcare must be the first priority for all, adding that doctors and other healthcare workers must uphold the trust of people. She acknowledged that there is shortage of manpower, assuring that these shortcomings will be addressed soon. The Minister also appreciated the administration and staff of GMC

Anantnag and its associated hospital for providing best healthcare services to people of South Kashmir.

On the occasion, Principal and Dean of GMC Anantnag, Dr. Rukhsana Najeeb, highlighted the work done and achievements of GMC Anantnag. She expressed gratitude to the Health Minister for providing remarkable support to GMC Anantnag for upgradation of manpower and infrastructure. She also congratulated the people of South Kashmir for getting the best medical care close to their doorsteps. Pertinently, with the inauguration of Cath-Lab, people of South Kashmir as well as Pir Panjal region will have a sigh of relief as they will get the best cardiac healthcare services in their vicinity.

## Residents of Khan Tulwari Langate Protest Over Delayed Land Compensation

■ DR.AB QAYOOM

Langate, Feb 20: The residents of Khan Tulwari village in Langate, led by an 87-year-old man, staged a peaceful protest against the district administration over the prolonged delay in receiving their land compensation near Khan Tulwari Bridge. The villagers expressed their frustration over the 11-year wait for their rightful dues and urged authorities to expedite the payment process. The localistold HEADLINES TODAY, that during the land acquisition process, officials had assured them of swift compensation. However, more than a decade has passed, and they are still waiting. "We have been continuously approaching the DC office in Kupwara, but every time, we receive only assurances. The Deputy Commissioner recently informed us that all formalities were completed by the R&B Division Langate and the Revenue Department, and that payments would be made soon. But now, seven months have passed, and nothing has changed," said an 80-year-old



protester. The residents clarified that they are not against developmental projects such as road connectivity and bridge construction but stressed the financial hardship they are facing. "We sacrificed our land for the bridge's construction, but many of us are unemployed and come from poor families. Our livelihood depended on this land, and now we are struggling to make ends meet," said a local resident. They urged the Lieutenant Governor's administration and DC Kupwara to take immediate action

and ensure that their compensation is disbursed without further delay. Meanwhile, the Executive Engineer (Exn) of R&B Division Langate assured that all necessary formalities regarding the landowners' compensation have been completed. He expressed hope that the payments would be released in the coming months. However, the affected residents remain skeptical, fearing further delays. The protesters vowed to continue their peaceful demonstrations until their rightful compensation is provided.

## NIT Srinagar faculty, former Director co-author book on 'Sustainable Pavement Construction'

■ HT News Network

Srinagar, Feb 20: Two faculty members from the Civil Engineering Department at NIT Srinagar, Dr. Vivek and Dr. Sandeep Samantaray, along with former NIT Srinagar Director Prof. Rakesh Sehgal, have co-authored a technical book titled Materials for Sustainable Pavement Construction, published by Taylor & Francis.

The first edition of the book will soon hit the markets, while the eBook is scheduled for release on March 31, 2025.

Speaking about their achievement, Dr. Vivek and Dr. Sandeep expressed their pride in completing the book under the guidance of Prof. Sehgal.

Dr. Vivek shared that after two years of rigorous efforts and multiple revisions,



he has successfully published his first technical book with Taylor & Francis.

He said the book provides a comprehensive overview of utilizing various waste materials in pavement construction, highlighting their potential to contribute to sustainable infrastructure development.

It explores alternative materials such as recycled

plastics, rubber, glass, and industrial by-products as substitutes for conventional materials like asphalt and concrete.

The book also discusses the properties and performance of different waste materials and their role in enhancing pavement durability, while also shedding light on the economic and environmental benefits, including lower construction costs and reduced

greenhouse gas emissions.

Meanwhile, Prof. Rakesh Sehgal, who served as Director of NIT Srinagar from November 2017 to May 2023, played a key role in the institute's growth, including a significant improvement in its NIRF ranking from 239th in 2019 to 66th in 2022.

Dr. Sandeep also said that Materials for Sustainable Pavement Construction serves as a valuable resource for researchers and graduate students in pavement and civil engineering.

He stated that this book provides detailed guidance on the selection, design, and implementation of waste materials in pavement construction, with a focus on practical applications. The book also features case studies showcasing successful real-world projects.

## MLA Irfan Hafeez Lone presides over water management prog at Wagoora

■ HT News Network

BARAMULLA, FEBRUARY 20: The Integrated Watershed Management Programme (IWMP) Baramulla organized a Watershed Yatra at Wagoora to promote sustainable water conservation practices and environmental awareness. Member Legislative Assembly (MLA) Wagoora-Kreeri, Advocate Irfan Hafeez Lone, presided over the event, emphasizing the importance of watershed management for ecological balance and water security. Speaking on the occasion, MLA Irfan Hafeez Lone highlighted the need for community participation in protecting natural resources.

## DC Kulgam reviews arrangements for Mahashivratri

■ Farooq Rather



KULGAM, FEBRUARY 20: In order to review and finalize arrangements for Mahashivratri celebrations, Deputy Commissioner Kulgam Athar Aamir Khan today convened a meeting of officers here at Mini-secretariat.

During the meeting, the DC directed the concerned departments to ensure uninterrupted supply of power and water at Vessu Migrant Colony, Manzgam, Kulgam, Chawalgam, Devsar and other habitations of the Kashmiri Pandit community. To facilitate the availability of traditional festive essentials, the Assistant Director Fisheries was instructed to establish sale outlets for trout fish at various locations, while the concerned officers were directed to ensure supply of vegetables, flower's and walnuts. Also, the Chief Medical Officer was told to ensure availability of medical facilities and deployment of ambulances at key locations. The Executive Officers (EOs) of the municipalities were directed to maintain proper sanitation at all temples.

## DC B'la reviews financial progress of sponsored schemes, performance of banking sector Directs enhanced credit flow, social security coverage in district

■ HT News Network

BARAMULLA, FEBRUARY 20: The District Level Review Committee (DLRC) meeting was held today under the chairmanship of DC Baramulla, Minga Sherpa, to review the financial progress of various government-sponsored schemes and banking sector performance in the district.

During the meeting, while reacting to the concerns raised by several departments regarding delays in loan disbursement by banks, particularly under the Prime Minister's Employment Generation Programme, DC directed banks to expedite the processing of cases as per guidelines to facilitate self-employment opportunities. He also emphasized the need



to strengthen priority sector lending and achieve saturation of Kisan Credit Cards (KCC) under PM Kisan.

To ensure comprehensive coverage of social security schemes, DC directed the formation of a subcommittee to identify beneficiaries of all government schemes, department-wise, and target them for enrollment under various welfare initiatives.

He also instructed officials to organize awareness sessions to educate people about government welfare schemes and financial assistance programs.

Additionally, the DC launched the Potential Linked Credit Plan (PLP) for the financial year 2025-26, prepared by NABARD. The PLP serves as a roadmap for boosting credit flow, particularly in agriculture, MSMEs, and rural infrastructure, to promote economic growth and self-employment.

The meeting was attended by District Agriculture Officer, District Lead Manager, Representative of RBI, DDMNABARD, bankers, sectoral officers, and other stakeholders.

## KVK Shopian starts skill dev training prog on Sheep Farming

■ HT News Network

SHOPIAN, FEBRUARY, 20: Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK) Shopian today inaugurated one-week entrepreneurship skill development programme on "Sheep Farming" at Berthipora, Shopian.

The programme was attended by Dr. Zaffar Afroz Badri, Senior Scientist & Head, KVK-Shopian; Dr. Bilal Ahmad Pandit, Scientist Horticulture; Dr. Mir Shabir Ahmad Scientist Animal Sciences; Dr. Shaiq Ahmad Ganai Scientist Food Technology, Scientists from KVK-Shopian besides other participants.

Dr. Bilal A Pandit on the occasion deliberated upon the approach of horticulture and sheep farming which can lead the district to the new heights of glory and improve the soil health to a larger extent. He considered sheep farming viable means for sustainable progress of the farming community.

Dr. Mir Shabir, Course Coordinator of the programme through a power point presentation focused on import of high quality sheep breeds besides importance and scope through multiple streams of sheep farming like mutton, wool, and pelt/hides.

Dr. Mir Shabir informed that SKUAST-K is planning to import the latest sheep breeds like Dorper, Texel, Finn, etc. under HADP project "Self Sufficiency in Mutton" and introduce in the valley to harvest the benefits of vast grazing area available in the UT of Jammu and Kashmir.

Dr. Zaffar Afroz Badri, Senior Scientist and Head KVK Shopian opined on the easy availability of fodder in district and grazing area which are the prerequisites for profitable sheep farming.

Dr. Shaiq Ahmad Ganai, Scientist Food Technology highlighted the HADP scheme for the benefit of the public.

## CUKashmir holds induction cum training prog for administrative staff

■ HT News Network

Ganderbal, Feb 20: Central University of Kashmir (CUKashmir) Vice Chancellor, Prof. A Ravinder Nath Thursday inaugurated a seven-day long Induction cum Training Programme (offline and online mode) for Lower Division Clerks, Department Assistants and Multi-Tasking Staff, some of whom recently joined the varsity.

Addressing the participants, Vice Chancellor, Prof. A Ravinder Nath said, the training programme marks a significant step in strengthening the institutional efficiency and professional development. "With an emphasis on overall skill enhancement and ethical conduct, the initiative aligns with the university's vision of fostering excellence in higher education," Prof. A Ravinder Nath said. CUKashmir Vice Chancellor further said such initiatives will continue to play a



vital role in creating a responsive and dynamic administrative system, contributing to the holistic growth of the institution. Prof. A Ravinder Nath, asked the participants to make contributions towards the institutional progress and development according to best of their abilities and knowledge. CUKashmir VC

asked the administrative staff to work with utmost dedication, honesty, conviction and commitment to make the university an institution par excellence.

Speaking on the occasion, Registrar, Prof. M Afzal Zargar, highlighted that while faculty members are at the forefront of academic excellence, the backbone of

any institution lies in its administrative workforce. He said the primary objective of organising the induction programme is to enhance skills and efficiency, and to familiarize new and existing non-teaching staff with university policies, rules, and best practices. "The training covers office management, communication, service regulations, and the critical role of administrative personnel in supporting academic activities," he said. CUKashmir Registrar lauded the dedication of the non-teaching staff and encouraged them to actively participate in the training sessions to enhance their efficiency and productivity. Prof. Zargar also addressed the participants on the topic "Organizational structure of the University."

Dean Academic Affairs, Prof. Shahid Rasool, who made a presentation on the topic "Understanding the Vision, Mission and Objectives," emphasized the crucial role of non-teaching staff in the smooth functioning of the university.



## District Administration Pulwama organizes Awareness Programme on New Criminal Laws

■ HT News Network

Pulwama, February 20: The District Administration today organized an awareness programme on the recently enacted criminal laws- Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, Bharatiya Nagrik Suraksha Sanhita and Bharatiya Sakshya Adhiniyam. The event aimed to familiarise the officers and officials with the significant provisions and implications of these new legal frameworks.

The programme commenced with a welcome address by the Deputy Commissioner (DC) Pulwama, Dr. Basharat Qayoom, who emphasized the importance of understanding and implementing the new laws effectively.



Speaking on the occasion, Dr. Basharat Qayoom, said, "The introduction of these new criminal laws is a landmark reform aimed at ensuring a more robust, transparent and citizen-friendly justice system. It is imperative for all stakeholders to acquaint themselves with these changes to ensure effective implementation and uphold the

rule of law in its true spirit."

The session featured detailed presentations on the three new laws by the guest speakers, including the Deputy Director of Prosecution and senior prosecuting officers, who thoroughly explained various facets of the newly introduced criminal laws.

The Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Pul-

wama and SSP Awantipora also addressed the gathering, sharing their insights on the impact of these laws on policing, investigation and justice delivery system.

They highlighted the reforms introduced by these legal provisions to enhance the efficiency, transparency and effectiveness of the criminal justice system.

The newly introduced laws prioritize justice over punishment, ensuring that delays in the legal process are minimized through speedy trials and timely justice.

These reforms are justice-oriented and victim-centric, with the potential to make the nation's criminal justice system more modern and significantly improve conviction rates.

## RDD Shopian conducts Mega Watershed Camp at Chitragam

MLA Zainapora Showkat Hussain Ganie stresses on need to address water scarcity through joint efforts

■ HT News Network

Shopian, February 20: Under WDC - PMKSY 2.0, a mega camp under Watershed Yatra was conducted in Block Chitragam by RDD Shopian today.

MLA Zainapora while speaking on the occasion highlighted problems faced by the people regarding water shortage in the area and the need to address the water scarcity through joint conservation efforts.

ADDC Shopian spoke in detail about the water scarcity challenges and problems and enumerated the viable solutions to tackle the scarcity.

The dignitaries inaugurated dramatic & sports events, flagged off the van to Imam Sahib block, administered water conservation pledge, conduct plantation drive & video screening.

It is pertinent to mention that the



IWMP scheme stresses on creating assets of water conservation at planning, preparatory and evaluation stages. The scheme has been running in Shopian since 2013 in different blocks under PMKSY 1 and PMKSY 2.

The scheme also included livelihood schemes to enhance the income of marginalised sections of people.

Besides, Self Help Groups, PRIs, WDTs and voluntary organisations and district agencies.

Among others, the event was attended by ACD Shopian, Manzoor Ahmad, Tehsildar Zainapora, BDO Zainapora, Xen REW, other officers and officials and large gathering of public.

## BJP's Altaf Thakur Slams Dynastic Politics, Questions Waleed Karra's Presence in Govt Meeting

■ HT News Network

Srinagar, Feb 20: BJP's Jammu and Kashmir spokesman Altaf Thakur today strongly criticized the presence of Waleed Karra, son of MLA Tariq Hamid Karra, at a high-level government review meeting in Srinagar, calling it a "blatant example of political nepotism" and a "gross violation of democratic norms."

Thakur questioned how an unelected individual was allowed to participate in an official meeting meant for elected representatives and senior bureaucrats. "How was Waleed Karra permitted to sit in a high-level review meeting? Who authorized his presence? Why did no one object to this clear breach of protocol?" he asked.

The BJP leader accused certain politicians in Jammu and Kashmir of treating governance as their "family fiefdom," undermining transparency and accountability. He demanded an immediate clarification from the government and



urged Chief Minister Omar Abdullah to take strict action.

"The people of Jammu and Kashmir deserve a transparent and accountable administration, not dynastic rule by proxy," Thakur asserted, warning that such incidents erode public trust and make a mockery of governance.

With a viral video also showing Waleed Karra inspecting a health facility, the controversy has sparked fresh debate over political favoritism and dynastic politics in the region. The government has yet to respond to the BJP's accusations

## AYUSH, Agri Deptt Anantnag holds seminar on medicinal plants as source of income

MLA Advocate Riyaz Khan emphasizes significance of medicinal, aromatic plant cultivation

■ HT News Network

Anantnag, February 20: The Department of AYUSH, in collaboration with the Agriculture Department Anantnag, organized a one-day seminar focused on promoting the cultivation of medicinal and aromatic plants as an alternative source of employment today at Mattan Anantnag.

MLA Shangus Anantnag East, Advocate Riyaz Khan, who was Chief Guest on the occasion, emphasized the significance of medicinal and aromatic plant cultivation in the current climate scenario.

He highlighted its potential to create sustainable employment opportunities and boost the rural economy.

The Guest of Honour, Chief Agri-



culture Officer Anantnag, Aijaz Ahmad Dar, elaborated on the initiatives undertaken to support and promote the cultivation of medicinal and aromatic plants. He encouraged farmers to explore this sector as a viable means of livelihood.

Earlier, welcoming the dignitaries and participants, District AYUSH Officer Anantnag, Dr. Ali Mohd Reshi, underscored the importance of medicinal plant cultivation in healthcare. He stressed the growing demand for natural remedies and the role farm-

ers can play in meeting the demand.

Experts from the AYUSH, Agriculture and Education Departments provided valuable insights into the best practices, economic benefits, and technical aspects of medicinal and aromatic plant cultivation. Farmers received in-depth knowledge on cultivation techniques, processing, and market opportunities.

A significant highlight of the seminar was the felicitation of progressive farmer Subzar Ahmad Wani, who was recognized for his remarkable success in medicinal plant cultivation. His achievements served as an inspiration to fellow farmers aspiring to venture into this. The event witnessed enthusiastic participation from farmers, experts, and officials dedicated to enhancing agricultural prospects in the region.

## DC reviews TB screening, treatment procedure in Poonch district

■ HT News Network

POONCH, FEBRUARY 20: Deputy Commissioner Poonch Vikas Kundal convened a meeting today at the DC office complex to assess the current status of TB cases and implementation of treatment protocol.

At the outset, the meeting was informed about the number of reported TB cases, their treatment status, besides the incidence rate. The review highlighted the importance of timely diagnosis and adherence to treatment protocols to combat the spread of this contagious disease.



The Deputy Commissioner emphasized the necessity of organizing awareness camps on Tuberculosis and instructed the Chief

Medical Officer (CMO) to ensure effective case detection.

Stress was also laid on roping in Nikshay Mitras for all TB patients

to extend nutritional support during their treatment.

The meeting was also informed about the National Level Screening Campaign for Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) and Tuberculosis being conducted from February 20 to March 31, 2025. The Deputy Commissioner told the CMO to activate teams to carry out the campaign, which aims to screen individuals for both NCDs—including diabetes, hypertension, and cancer and TB.

The meeting was attended by CMO Dr. Parvaiz Ahmed Khan, Dr. Farhana, and other concerned officials, all committed to enhancing public health in the region.

## Chief Justice inaugurates Court Room, Bar rooms at HC complex Janipur

■ HT News Network

JAMMU, FEBRUARY 20: With a view to enhance infrastructural facilities in the Jammu Wing of High Court and provide speedy justice to the litigants, Chief Justice, High Court of J&K and Ladakh, Justice Tashi Rabstan, today inaugurated a newly constructed Court Room on the ground floor of High Court Complex at Janipur, Jammu, in presence of companion Judges.

The Chief Justice also inaugurated newly upgraded Lady Advocates' Bar Room and Senior Advocates Bar Room, which was long pending demand of High Court Bar Association. Justice Atul Sreedharan, Justice Sindhu Sharma, Justice Rajnesh Oswal, Justice Mohd. Akram Chowdhury, Justice Moksha Khajuria Kazmi, Justice Wasim Sadiq Nargal and Justice Rajesh Sekhri graced the occasion by their presence. Besides, Shahzad Azeem, Registrar



General; M.K. Sharma, Principal Secretary to Chief Justice; Anoop Kumar Sharma, Registrar IT; Sandeep Kour, Registrar Judicial, Jammu Wing; Meyank Gupta, Joint Registrar (Judicial/Protocol); Nimral Kotwal, President, J&K High Court Bar Association, Jammu; Senior Members of Bar Association besides other officers and officials of the Registry were also present on the occasion.

## SLCA holds orgainises prog on drug de-addiction for master volunteers at Bandiporan

■ HT News Network

Bandipora, Feb 20: The State Level Coordinating Agency (SLCA) J&K in collaboration with National Institute of Social Defence on thursday organised a one day training programme on Drug De-addiction for Master Volunteers at Mini-secretariat Bandipora under Nasha Mukti Bharat Abhiyan (NMBA).

The programme was aimed at equipping the volunteers with the knowledge and skills to combat drug addiction at the grassroot level.

The training programme sponsored by Ministry of Social

Justice and empowerment, Govt. of India and District Administration Bandipora was presided over by Additional Deputy Commissioner Bandipora Zaffar Husson Shawl and was attended by District Social Welfare Officer Sahir Majeed, Padmashree Faisal Ali Dar-Brand Ambassador Nasha Mukti Bharat Abhiyaan for Bandipora, Youth and student Volunteer and other concerned.

In his introductory address DSWO Sahir Majeed emphasized intensive awareness under Nasha Mukti Bharat Abhiyaan to ensure its benefits reach every corner of the district.



He urged volunteers and other stakeholders to take responsibility and contribute

in making the campaign a success to combat the drug menace. Speaking on the occasion,

ADC Zaffar Husson Shawl emphasized community involvement in addressing the

growing issue of substance abuse and deliberated on devastating impact of drug abuse on addicts and their families.

Zaffar Husson, emphasized the role of NGOs and volunteers in addition to efforts of Government to combat drug abuse and also emphasized proper monitoring of vulnerable groups and intensive awareness.

The training imparted by Programme Director, SLCA Pallavi Sing discussed various measures aimed at equipping the volunteers with essential knowledge and skills to combat drug addiction at the grassroots level.

She deliberated on preva-

lence of substance abuse in India besides National Action Plan for Drug Demand Reduction.

She also highlighted implementation strategy and major functions under NMBA to curb drug menace besides role of DDAC, ATF and ODIC.

Pallavi sing highlighted the role of master volunteers in identifying the hotspots and risk groups besides conducting awareness and capacity building programmes.

Brand Ambassador NMBA, Faisal Ali Dar also highlighted harmful impact of drug abuse on society urging everyone to take a stand against growing problem of drug menace.



# Reasi Administration launches awareness campaign on New Criminal Laws

■ HT News Network

REASI, FEBRUARY 20: The District Administration Reasi has launched a comprehensive mass awareness program to educate the public about the new criminal laws—Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita 2023, Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita 2023, and Bharatiya Sakshya Adhiniyam 2023. The initiative aims to educate the citizens about these transformative legal reforms and their implications. Marking the commencement of the campaign, District Magistrate Nidhi Malik chaired an awareness program here at General Zorawar Singh Memorial Degree College. She emphasized the significance of spreading legal awareness among the public. “The people need to know about how these laws will have a positive impact on society, particularly benefiting women and children through strengthened protective measures” she added. She spoke in detail about the provisions aimed at prompt justice delivery and public safety.

The District Magistrate informed that



nine more awareness camps on new laws will be held at the block level to reach a larger audience. She reiterated the commitment of district administration to promote legal literacy so that every citizen understands his rights and responsibilities under the new legal framework.

Other Officials, including SSP Paramvir

Singh, ADC Rakesh Kumar, PO ICDS Mohammad Anwar, ASI Iftkhar and Legal experts also participated in the event, providing insights into the practical applications of the new laws. They engaged in interactive discussions with students and the public, addressing queries and concerns regarding the implementation of these reforms.

The initiative reflects the administration's dedication to ensuring that the legal system becomes more accessible, transparent, and citizen-centric. The District Administration Reasi has launched a comprehensive mass awareness program to educate the public about the new criminal laws—Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita 2023, Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita 2023, and Bharatiya Sakshya Adhiniyam 2023. The initiative aims to educate the citizens about these transformative legal reforms and their implications. Marking the commencement of the campaign, District Magistrate Nidhi Malik chaired an awareness program here at General Zorawar Singh Memorial Degree College. She emphasized the significance of spreading legal awareness among the public. “The people need to know about how these laws will have a positive impact on society, particularly benefiting women and children through strengthened protective measures” she added. She spoke in detail about the provisions aimed at prompt justice delivery and public safety.

## Floriculture Department hosts Kissan Goshti at Village Trown in Block Bhalla

■ HT News Network

DODA, FEBRUARY 20: The Department of Floriculture, Parks and Gardens organized a one-day Kissan Goshti (interactive meet) here at Trown Panchayat in Block Bhalla. The event aimed to educate farmers on commercial floriculture practices and address challenges in cultivating aromatic crops. Assistant Floriculture Officer for Pawan Kumar led the discussions on commercial floriculture activities in the district. He provided insights into the cultivation of aromatic crops such as lavender and rosemary, emphasizing their economic potential. Farmers shared experiences and challenges related to marigold and lavender cultivation, seeking guidance on best practices.

Prominent progressive growers, including Bharat Bhushan and Kunj Lal, attended the meet and praised the department's ongoing support. Former Sarpanch of Trown Panchayat, Riyaz Ahmed, commended the department for organizing awareness programs that aim to uplift the socio-economic status of the farming community. The event underscored the importance of collaborative efforts between the Floriculture Department and local farmers to promote sustainable agricultural practices and enhance income through commercial floriculture. Prominent progressive growers, including Bharat Bhushan and Kunj Lal, attended the meet and praised the department's ongoing support. Former Sarpanch of Trown Panchayat, Riyaz Ahmed.

## Measures for effective PMEGP implementation, timely loan disbursement discussed at Doda

■ HT News Network

DODA, FEBRUARY 20: A crucial review meeting on the Prime Minister's Employment Generation Programme (PMEGP) was held today under the chairmanship of the General Manager District Industries Centre (DIC) here to address challenges related to the sanctioning and disbursement of loans to aspiring entrepreneurs. The meeting was attended by Lead District Manager (LDM), branch heads of various banks, and the District Coordinator for Government-Sponsored Schemes. Directions were issued to enhance the efficiency of loan processing. Banks were instructed to streamline loan approvals, regularly monitor disbursements, and improve coordination among stakeholders. The General Manager stressed the importance of timely disbursement, ensuring that entrepreneurs can establish their ventures without unnecessary delays. Additionally, officials were advised to conduct outreach programs to raise awareness about PMEGP benefits among potential beneficiaries.

The meeting also emphasized



clearing pending applications and ensuring that no eligible applicant is left behind due to administrative delays. The General Manager reaffirmed that these measures are essential for boosting local entrepreneurship and creating sustainable employment opportunities in the district. The meeting concluded with a commitment to implementing these directions effectively to strengthen

PMEGP's execution in Doda. The meeting was attended by Lead District Manager (LDM), branch heads of various banks, and the District Coordinator for Government-Sponsored Schemes. Directions were issued to enhance the efficiency of loan processing. Banks were instructed to streamline loan approvals, regularly monitor disbursements, and improve coordination.

## DC Poonch reviews PM Gati Shakti implementation, formulation of Master Plan

■ HT News Network

POONCH, FEBRUARY 20: Deputy Commissioner Poonch, Vikas Kundal today chaired a meeting to discuss the implementation of PM Gati Shakti at the district level and the formulation of the Master Plan for the District.

The meeting focused on using the PM Gati Shakti portal for all future planning activities in the district, which is expected to bring about more efficient, transparent, and coordinated development.

The DC emphasized that all future planning in the District will be carried out using the PM Gati Shakti portal. He stressed that this approach will not only streamline



the planning and execution of projects but will also have a far-reaching impact on the overall development of the district,

ensuring transparency, effectiveness, and better coordination among stakeholder departments. The use of the portal will

contribute to the implementation of development projects in a seamless and accountable manner, ultimately benefiting the citizens of Poonch.

Experts connected via Bharat VC provided a comprehensive demonstration of the PM Gati Shakti portal's features and functionalities. The demo showcased how the portal aids in real-time monitoring, effective project execution and enhances inter-departmental coordination facilitating speedy planning and implementation of projects.

The meeting was attended by GM DIC Poonch, ACR Poonch, ACP, CMO Poonch, DFO Poonch, DIO NIC Poonch, ARTO Poonch, CEO MC, Xen PWD (R&B) besides other concerned officers.

## Divisional Commissioner reviews developmental activities in District Reasi

■ HT News Network

REASI, FEBRUARY 20: Divisional Commissioner Jammu Ramesh Kumar on Thursday chaired a meeting of functionaries of District administration Reasi to review developmental and economic activities in the District. The meeting evaluated financial and physical achievements under the District Capex Budget, CRIF scheme, PMAY Scheme, Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM), MGNREGA, and other key developmental initiatives. At the start, Deputy Commissioner Nidhi Malik gave a detailed



presentation on the district's developmental scenario and implementation of the government schemes across different sectors.

The Divisional Commissioner directed the Executive Engineer (XEN) of the Public Works Department (PWD) to expedite the construction of roadside drain-

age systems. He stressed the need for fast tracking infrastructure development and instructed officials to ensure effective fund utilization to complete the works within the stipulated time frame.

Reviewing achievements in the education sector, the Divisional Com-

missioner underscored the need to improve female literacy rate in the district. He directed the Chief Education Officer (CEO) to conduct a special admission drive to motivate students and enhance enrollment.

Further, he instructed the CEO to hold regular meetings with Zonal Education Officers (ZEOs) to monitor progress and implement necessary measures to strengthen the education system. Assessing healthcare initiatives, the Divisional Commissioner called for maximizing coverage of Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (PMJAY) scheme.

## DC reviews implementation of National Tobacco Control Programme in Samba District

■ HT News Network

SAMBA, FEBRUARY 20: Deputy Commissioner Samba, Rajesh Sharma today chaired the meeting of District Level Coordination Committee (DLCC) on the National Tobacco Control Programme (NTCP) here at the DC Complex.

Convened by the office of Chief Medical Officer, the meeting focused on strategizing effective tobacco control in the district. Divisional Coordinator NTCP Shweta presented a Power point presentation on the Program and its implementation.



The meeting emphasized strict enforcement of the COTPA Act and regular monitoring and evaluation to track progress and address emerging challenges.

The discussions reinforced a collaborative approach, underlining the

need for taking effective measures to curb tobacco use and promote public health awareness in the district.

The meeting was attended by Senior Superintendent of Police Virender Singh Manhas; Addi-

Development Commissioner, Champa Devi and other district officers and other stakeholders including the members of civil society. Convened by the office of Chief Medical Officer, the meeting focused on strategizing effective tobacco control in the district. Divisional Coordinator NTCP Shweta presented a Power point presentation on the Program and its implementation.

The meeting emphasized strict enforcement of the COTPA Act and regular monitoring and evaluation to track progress and address emerging challenges.

## DMRRR department organised two day disaster management mock exercise at Jammu Airport

■ HT News Network

JAMMU, FEBRUARY 20: The National Disaster Management Authority of India, Airport Authority Jammu Airport and Jammu & Kashmir Disaster Management Authority jointly conducted a Disaster Management Mock Exercise on February 18 and 19. All the Stakeholders, multiple agencies participated in the earthquake mock drill. The J&K Disaster Management department is committed to deal with any disaster situation and is carrying out regular preparedness drills involving mobilization of resources and responders.

During the two day long Mock exercise, diverse stakeholders besides disaster managers and responders were brought together on a single platform enabling them to exploit their capabilities and various procedures/processes for effective, timely and coordinated response.

## DC Doda convenes public outreach camp to address public grievances

■ HT News Network

DODA, FEBRUARY 20: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Harvinder Singh, visited Panchayat Hambal-B in Marmat Tehsil to listen and address public grievances, with focus on improving connectivity, resolving local issues and strengthening governance at the grassroots level.

The DC was accompanied by officials from NHIDCL, ASP, Tehsildars and representatives of other departments.

Public grievances regarding road connectivity, infrastructure development, and other civic issues were heard in detail. After consultations with executing agencies and local representatives, the DC resolved several issues projected raised by the residents. The DC set timelines for addressing remaining Grievances, while emphasizing the importance of inter-departmental coordination to meet the targets.

## DLSA Kathua holding Pre-Lok

## Adalat from Feb 21 to Mar 7, 2025 ahead of NLA

■ HT News Network

KATHUA, FEBRUARY 20: The District Legal Services Authority (DLSA), Kathua is organizing Pre-Lok Adalat from February 21 to March 7, 2025 ahead of this year's first National Lok Adalat (NLA) scheduled on March 8, 2025 and being held at the ADR Centre of the Court Complex.

The initiative aims to facilitate the amicable settlement and final disposal of cases by providing litigants and advocates a platform to resolve disputes efficiently.

The Pre-Lok Adalat will take up both pre-litigation and pending cases. Pre-litigation cases include cheque bounce cases under the Negotiable Instruments Act, bank recovery cases, labour disputes, and water bill disputes.

The pending cases such as criminal compoundable cases, Negotiable Instrument Act (Cheque Bounce Cases), bank recovery cases, besides MACT (Motor Accident Claims Tribunal) cases, matrimonial disputes, domestic violence and maintenance cases, land acquisition matters, labour challans, and civil cases will also be considered for settlement.

Individuals or departments interested in resolving disputes through the Lok Adalat are encouraged to approach the office of the District Legal Services Authority, Kathua, with relevant case details, including case title, case number, date of hearing, and court name, for listing before the Lok Adalat bench. Individuals or departments interested in resolving disputes through the Lok Adalat are encouraged to approach the office of the District Legal Services Authority, Kathua, with relevant case details, including case title, case number, date of hearing, and court name, for listing before the Lok Adalat bench.





## MoD signs Rs 697 crore contracts for procurement of RTFLT for Armed Forces

### AGENCIES

NEW DELHI, FEB 20 (UNI)

The Defence Ministry has signed contracts with ACE Limited and JCB India Limited for procurement of 1868 Rough Terrain Fork Lift Trucks (RTFLT) worth Rs 697.35 crore for Indian Army, Indian Air Force and Indian Navy.

These contracts were signed in presence of Defence Secretary R K Singh, a Defence Ministry statement said here on Thursday.

Rough Terrain Fork Lift Truck (RTFLT) is a critical equipment which will assist in various combat and logistics support tasks by avoiding manual handling of enormous number of stores, thus enhancing the operational effectiveness of the armed forces.

This project has immense potential of direct and indirect employment generation by encouraging MSME sector through component's manufacturing.

The procurement marks a pivotal step towards modernising India's defence infrastructure and empowering indigenous industries, which will be a proud flag-bearer of 'Aatmnirbhar Bharat'.

## Lokayukta clears CM Siddaramaiah in MUDA case

### AGENCIES

MYSURU, FEB 20 (UNI)

The Karnataka Lokayukta has given a clean chit to Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, his wife Parvathi, and two others in connection with the alleged Mysuru Urban Development Authority (MUDA) site allotment scam.

A notice was sent to complainant Snehamayi Krishna, an RTI activist, on Wednesday, informing him that he may challenge the Lokayukta probe report within a week before the designated magistrate.

The notice stated that an investigation was conducted under various provisions of the Indian Penal Code, the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988, the Benami Transactions (Prohibition) Act, 1988, and the Karnataka Land Grabbing Prohibition Act, 2011, against Siddaramaiah, Parvathi, Mallikarjuna Swamy (Parvathi's brother), and landowner Devaraj. The inquiry concluded that the matter falls under civil dispute and found no sufficient proof to substantiate criminal charges against them.

The Lokayukta police stated that compensatory land allotments made by MUDA between 2016 and 2024 under its 50:50 scheme remain under investigation.

A report will be submitted to the court under Section 173(8) of the CrPC upon completion of the probe.

Reacting to the notice, Krishna expressed dissatisfaction, stating that he had anticipated such an outcome. "The Lokayukta notice states that there is no proof to substantiate my allegations. Then, did I provide them with baseless information? The Chief Minister is accused No. 1 in this case, and naturally, government officers under him have come to his rescue. I will continue my legal battle after reviewing the 'B' report submitted by the Lokayukta police," he asserted.

Krishna had earlier submitted a petition to Governor Thaawarchand Gehlot, who approved a probe against Siddaramaiah. On September 27, a special court directed the filing of an FIR against the Chief Minister, his wife, and two others.

The investigation was led by a team of Lokayukta officers, headed by SP TJ Udesha, who questioned MUDA officials, politicians, and other individuals before submitting their findings to Lokayukta IGP A Subramanyeshwara Rao.

## Bangladesh Airlines makes emergency landing at Nagpur Airport

### AGENCIES

NAGPUR, FEB 20 (UNI)

A Biman Bangladesh Airlines flight from Dhaka to Dubai made an emergency landing at Nagpur airport due to a technical fault in Maharashtra, officials said on Thursday.

According to sources, Biman Bangladesh Airlines had 396 passengers and 12 crew members, on board.

The flight was diverted and made the emergency landing at around midnight on Wednesday due to technical issues, sources added.

Later, passengers were flown by another flight to their final destination, said the officials.

This is not the first instance of an unscheduled landing at Nagpur airport. Earlier this year, in January, two flights were diverted due to bad weather.

# Rekha Gupta takes oath as Delhi CM, six ministers also sworn in

### AGENCIES

NEW DELHI, FEB 20 (UNI)

Rekha Gupta, a first-time BJP MLA from Shalimar Bagh was sworn-in as the fourth woman Chief Minister of Delhi along with her six Cabinet Ministers at a mega event in Ramlila maidan on Thursday.

Delhi Lieutenant Governor V K Saxena administered the oath of office and secrecy to Rekha Gupta and her six Council of Ministers. The six Cabinet Ministers are Parvesh Verma (New Delhi), Manjinder Singh Sirsa (Rajouri Garden), Ravindra Kumar Indraj (Bawana), Kapil Mishra (Karawal Nagar), Ashish Sood (Janakpuri), and Pankaj Kumar Singh (Vikaspuri). Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Union Home Minister Amit Shah, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) National President J.P. Nadda, and Chief Ministers and Deputy CMs of the National Democratic Alliance (NDA)-ruled



States were present during the ceremony.

Rekha Gupta is the 4th woman Chief Minister of Delhi after Sushma Swaraj (BJP), Sheila Dikshit (Congress) and Atishi (AAP). She is also the fourth BJP chief minister of Delhi after Madan Lal Khurana, Sahib Singh Verma and Sushma Swaraj.

In her first response after being chosen as the CM, she expressed her commitment for the development of Delhi, pledging to work with honesty and dedication.

"I express my heartfelt gratitude to all the top leadership for entrusting me with the responsibility of the Chief Minister's

post. This trust and support has given me new energy and inspiration. I pledge to work with full honesty, integrity, and dedication for the welfare, empowerment, and overall development of every citizen of Delhi. I am fully committed to this important opportunity to take Delhi to new heights," she wrote in a post on X.

The suspense over Delhi's next Chief Minister ended on Wednesday. At a crucial meeting, the BJP MLAs chose Rekha Gupta as their legislature party leader.

She met Lieutenant Governor VK Saxena and staked her claim to form the next government.

# Kapil Mishra sworn-in as Delhi Cabinet Minister

### AGENCIES

NEW DELHI, FEB 20 (UNI)

Kapil Mishra, sworn-in as Cabinet Minister in Delhi government led by Rekha Gupta on Thursday, was a former member of the Delhi Legislative Assembly who represented Karawal Nagar. He won from Karawal Nagar Constituency in the recently held Assembly election defeating his AAP rival Manoj Kumar Tyagi by a margin of 23,355 votes.

Mishra had won from the Karawal Nagar Assembly Constituency in the 2015 Delhi election on Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) ticket by a margin of 44,431 votes, defeating Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) candidate and four-time MLA Mohan Singh Bisht.

He, however, left the AAP in 2019 to join the BJP. Some might say Mishra was a "blue blood" in politics, with his mother Annapurna Mishra being a former BJP Mayor from East Delhi.

Founder of Youth for Justice, a social justice organisation, the BJP MLA



was involved in movements against farmer suicides, Yamuna encroachment and Commonwealth Games scandal, even authoring a book called 'Its Common VS Wealth' on the issue in 2010.

Mishra had been inducted into the Cabinet as the Water Resources Minister in the Arvind Kejriwal-led Delhi government. But he was removed from the Ministry after he accused Kejriwal and Cabinet colleague Satyendar Jain of corruption.

The BJP leader had lodged a complaint with the Anti-Corruption Bureau against Kejriwal, saying he and Jain took Rs 2 crore in bribe, but Mishra failed to prove it.

Despite being an AAP

MLA, he was seen supporting and sharing the stage with BJP leaders. He even campaigned against his own party during the Lok Sabha election in 2019.

These anti-party activities were brought to the notice of Assembly Speaker Ram Niwas Goel. After due process under the rule of paragraph 2(1) (a) of the tenth schedule of the Indian constitution on grounds of defection and anti-party activities, Mishra was disqualified as an MLA on August 2, 2019.

After his expulsion, Mishra officially joined the BJP in the presence of party leaders Manoj Tiwari, Vijay Goel and Satish Upadhyay, on August 17, 2019.

# EAM Jaishankar in Johannesburg, holds talks with Singaporean, Brazilian counterparts

### AGENCIES

JOHANNESBURG/NEW DELHI, FEB 20 (UNI)

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar met with his Singaporean counterpart Vivian Balakrishnan and with Mauro Vieira, the FM of Brazil, on the sidelines of the G20 Foreign Ministers Meeting in Johannesburg today.

He said in posts on X: "Always a good conversation with FM @VivianBala of Singapore, this time in Johannesburg on the sidelines of G20 FMM.

"Discussed the state of the world and our work in furthering bilateral ties."

On his meeting with the Foreign Minister of Brazil, he said that they discussed bilateral ties, global devel-



opments, their work in the G20 and Brazil's BRICS Presidency.

"Delighted to meet FM Mauro Vieira of Brazil today in Johannesburg.

"Discussed bilateral ties, global developments, our work in the G20 and Brazil's BRICS Presidency."

External Affairs Minister Jaishankar is on a two-day visit to Johannesburg, South Africa, from February 20-21 to participate in the G20 Foreign Ministers' Meeting (FMM).

The visit is at the invitation of the Minister of International Relations and Cooperation of South Africa Ronald Lamola.

EAM's participation in the G20 FMM will strengthen India's engagement with G20 countries and bolster the voice of the Global South in this important forum, a statement said.

EAM is expected to hold a few bilateral meetings on the margins of the FMM.

# Envoys of five nations present credentials to President Murmu



### AGENCIES

NEW DELHI, FEB 20 (UNI)

The envoys of five nations - Panama, Guyana, Sudan, Denmark and Palestine-, presented their credentials to President Droupadi Murmu at a ceremony in

Rashtrapati Bhavan today. Those who presented their credentials were:

1. Alonso Correa Miguel, Ambassador of the Republic of Panama 2. Dharamkumar Seeraj, High Commissioner of the Cooperative Republic of Guyana

3. Mohammed Abdalla Ali Eltom, Ambassador of the Republic of Sudan 4. Rasmus Abildgaard Kristensen, Ambassador of Denmark 5. Abdullah Mohammad A. Abushawesh, Ambassador of the State of Palestine.

# UP govt presents budget of Rs 8.08L cr for 2025-26 in the assembly

### AGENCIES

LUCKNOW, FEB 20 (UNI)

The Uttar Pradesh government on Thursday presented a budget of Rs 8,08,736.06 crore in the Uttar Legislative Assembly for the financial year 2025-26, which is the biggest budget size presented so far.

While placing the budget proposals on the table of the House, Finance Minister Suresh Kumar Khanna said that the size of budget is Rs 8,08,736.06 crore, which is 9.8 percent higher as compared to the last budget for the fiscal year 2024-2025. "The capital outlay in the budget is about 20.5 percent of the total budget," he said.

He said that the budget includes new schemes of Rs 28,478.34 crore. "Total receipts are estimated at Rs 7,79,242.65 crore, which includes revenue receipts of Rs 6,62,690.93 crore and capital receipts of Rs 1,16,551.72 crore," he said.

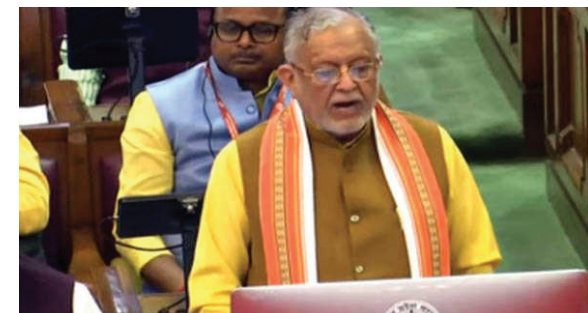
Khanna said that the share of tax revenue in revenue receipts is Rs 5,50,172.21 crore and

capital receipts of Rs 1,16,551.72 crore. "Out of the total expenditure Rs 5,83,174.57 crore is proposed to be spent on the revenue account and Rs 2,25,561.49 crore on the capital account," he said.

The fiscal deficit is estimated at Rs 91,399.8 crore which is 2.97 percent of the year's estimated Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP).

The Finance Minister said that the infrastructure development, expansion and investment related expenditure come under capital outlay. "The role of capital expenditure is very important in important activities like industry, transportation, access of products to the market and attracting capital investment in the state," he said.

He said that in the budget, 22 percent has been allocated for infrastructure development, 13 percent for education, 11 percent for agriculture and allied services, 6 percent in the field of medical and health, 4 percent for social security programmes and resources.



Khanna said that Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has set a target of making the state's economy of 1 trillion dollars. "Keeping this in mind, the government has prepared a sector-wise action plan by identifying agriculture and cadre services, infrastructure, industry, IT and electronics, health and family welfare, education, tourism, urban development, financial services, energy and capital investment. Work is going on on the sector-wise action plan by the concerned departments, which is being reviewed regularly."

He said that with dedication towards the work of sustainable development for smooth policy implementation, ease of doing

business and attracting investment, the overall flow of balanced investment in all the regions of the state and long-term values and arrangements for improving the lives of the citizens have been ensured.

The Minister said that the government is committed to implement its mission of establishing the state as a major investment centre and the growth engine of the country.

He said that in the year 2017-2018, the economy of the state was in a bad state and the GSDP was only at the level of Rs 12.89 lakh crore. "During the tenure of his government, the economy of the state has doubled. In the year 2024-2025, the GSDP of the state

is estimated to be 27.51 lakh crore. We are now standing at the leading position among the states increasing the growth rate in the country," he said.

He said that in the year 2023-2024, the GDP growth rate of India was 9.6 percent while the growth rate of UP was 11.6 percent. "In the financial year 2016-2017, the per capita income of the state was only Rs 52,671 per annum. In a period of just three years, the per capita income increased to Rs 65,660 per annum in 2019-2020," he said.

Khanna said that for three years the economy of the whole world was shocked due to the horror of the Covid epidemic. "Achieving an unprecedented annual growth rate of 14.9 percent in just three years, we have brought the per capita income to the level of Rs 93,514 in the year 2023-2024. During this period, the development expenditure of all the states as a percentage of GSDP was 10.9, 11.9 and 12 percent respectively, while in UP this average was 13.8,

16 and 16.7 percent respectively," he said.

He said that compared to the average expenditure on medical, health and family welfare as a percentage of total expenditure by all the states, the expenditure made by UP from the year 2017-2018 to 2024-2025 remained consistently higher, except for the financial years 2018-2019 and 2021-2022. In the year 2017-2018, the ratio of UP has been 5.3 as compared to the average ratio of 5.0 percent of all states and 5.9 percent as compared to 5.6 percent in 2024-2025.

The Minister said that the debt burden of the state, which was 36.7 percent of GSDP at the end of the year 2016-2017, has come down to 30.4 percent in the actual figures of the year 2022-2023. "The state government has not only emphasised on the growth of its internal resources, but has also increased expenditure on development and health services and reduced indebtedness. This is a sign of efficient financial management of the government," he said.



## A simple blood test may detect risk of preterm delivery in expectant mothers

### AGENCIES

NEW DELHI, FEB 20

A team of US and Canadian researchers has found that a simple blood test can help determine which mothers are more likely to deliver a baby preterm, an advance that may lead to the development of a universal screening strategy to prevent preterm births that can both cause harm to the mother and the baby.

Researchers from Mount Sinai Hospital and the University of Toronto showed that low levels of placental growth factor (PIGF) -- a protein that signals placental development -- are associated with preterm birth. Preterm birth is defined as a birth before 34 weeks' gestation.

Their findings, published in JAMA Network Open, also suggests that a simple blood test to detect the level in expectant mothers could alert



physicians to a need for enhanced monitoring and delivery planning. PIGF is a protein released by the placenta into maternal blood.

It acts to promote relaxation of the maternal blood vessels and helps normalise the blood pressure of pregnant women despite the large increase in blood volume and cardiac output needed to

support the growth of the baby. It also protects the mother from blood loss at delivery.

The team showed that low levels of PIGF contribute to the development of a potentially dangerous type of hypertension called preeclampsia. The condition ultimately necessitates physician-initiated early delivery in two-thirds of patients with

low PIGF levels.

A second complication, foetal growth restriction -- accounts for the majority of other medically indicated preterm births.

"If you know in advance that you're high risk, there are ways to improve pregnancy outcomes. "It starts with self-monitoring for elevated blood pressure and perhaps taking anti-hypertensive medications to keep it under control," said Rachel Gladstone, from Sinai Health.

"And if you originally had plans to deliver at a community hospital or remote location, you could decide to receive care at a tertiary centre, which may be safer for both mother and baby than emergency transport to such centres for unanticipated complications," she added.

PIGF levels rise as the healthy placenta develops, reaching a peak by 28 weeks as the third trimester commences.

## Indian scientists find common biomarkers for early diagnosis of pancreatic, glioma cancers

### AGENCIES

NEW DELHI, FEB 20

A team of scientists from the Institute of Nano Science and Technology (INST), Mohali -- an autonomous institute of the Department of Science and Technology (DST) -- has identified some common metabolites of hard to detect pancreatic and glioma cancers, which can boost their early diagnosis and lead to better treatment outcomes.

The team identified metabolites in exosomes derived from pancreatic cancer, lung cancer and glioma cancer cell line, which offers potential universal biomarkers resulting in enhanced clinical applicability.

"This offers a potential non-invasive method for early cancer diagnosis as well as therapeutic strategies for cancer," said the researchers in the paper, published in the journal Nanoscale. Aggressive



cancers like pancreatic and glioma cancers often diagnosed late and having poor prognoses. Hence there is an urgent need for non-invasive, reliable cancer biomarkers to address significant gaps in cancer diagnostics and therapeutics, particularly for pancreatic and glioma cancers, which lack early detection methods.

Nano messengers (exosomes) -- as carriers of tumour-derived metabolites -- provide a unique opportunity to explore

the tumour microenvironment (TME), said the team, including Nandini Bajaj and Dr. Deepika Sharma from the Institute.

The researchers utilised a multi-technique approach combining Nanoparticle Tracking Analysis (NTA), Electron Microscopy (EM), Western Blot (WB), Fourier Transformed Infrared Spectroscopy (FTIR), untargeted

Liquid Chromatography-Tandem Mass Spectrometry (LC-MS/MS), and Nuclear Magnetic Reso-

nance (NMR) -- providing a comprehensive characterisation of exosomes, surpassing conventional single-method studies.

The study advances cancer diagnostics, personalised medicine, and our understanding of cancer progression mechanisms. These metabolites identified highlight dysregulated pathways in the tumour microenvironment and also gives insights on how the cancer progresses and enables non-invasive and precise cancer detection and therapeutic targeting.

The findings can lead to the development of targeted therapies that can disrupt dysregulated metabolic pathways in tumours, enhancing treatment efficacy and potentially reducing side effects.

This advancement could significantly improve patient outcomes, especially through personalised, precision medicine approaches.

## Quantum computing, AI to revolutionise drug discovery in India: Ex-ICMR chief

### AGENCIES

NEW DELHI, FEB 20

Quantum computing and Artificial Intelligence (AI) to revolutionise drug discovery in India, and enable the country to become a global hub for pharmaceutical advancements, said Dr. Balram Bhargava, Former Director General, ICMR.

He was speaking at the 9th "International Symposium on Current Trends in Drug Discovery Research" at CSIR-Central Drug Research Institute, Lucknow.

"India's strength in drug discovery stems from its rich heritage in chemistry, making it a global hub for pharmaceutical advancements," said Bhargava, Dean and Senior Consultant, Holy Family Hospital, New Delhi.

"The integration of Quantum Computing and Artificial Intelligence (AI) is set to revolutionise



drug discovery, accelerating research and reducing costs," he added.

The expert noted that India has consistently demonstrated its ability to produce high-quality, affordable medicines, ensuring healthcare accessibility worldwide. However, challenges such as the availability of Active

Pharmaceutical Ingredients (APIs) and the need for new drug discoveries remain key areas of focus. Further, Bhargava called for collaborations to boost India's pharmaceutical success, as seen in the development of vaccines.

"Market shaping is equally important, ensuring that innovations reach

the masses while maintaining India's leadership in cost-effective healthcare solutions," he said.

The event, aimed to discuss new strategies in synthetic and medicinal chemistry in the country, also witnessed the presence of global experts from the universities of Florida and Minnesota in the US. They spoke on breakthroughs in pain management strategies as well as the need to develop new antimicrobial agents with novel mechanisms.

Meanwhile, Dr. Arindam Talukdar from CSIR-Indian Institute of Chemical Biology (IICB), Kolkata, shared his research findings on the stimulation of agonism-antagonism in TLR7 modulators via complex interactions between chemical subunits.

The TLR7 is an endosomal TLR protein that helps the body to recognise and respond to viruses and bacteria.

## Tech advancements, expanding healthcare access to boost India's surgical market

### AGENCIES

NEW DELHI, FEB 20

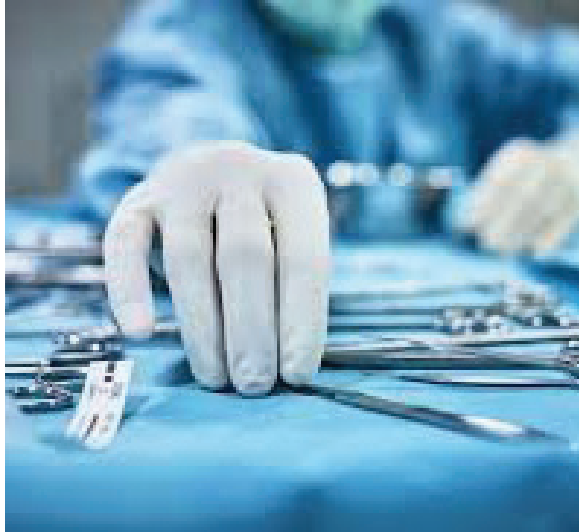
Tech advancements and expanding healthcare access are driving the surgical market in India, according to a report on Thursday.

The report by 1Lattice showed that India's healthcare sector is witnessing a transformative shift, with its surgical landscape evolving rapidly due to increasing demand for high-quality and cost-effective procedures.

India performs an estimated Rs 3 crore surgeries annually, with general surgery and obstetrics and gynaecology emerging as the dominant specialties.

The report highlights key trends, including the rising adoption of robotic-assisted surgeries (RAS), the shift toward minimally invasive procedures, and the expansion of healthcare services into Tier II and beyond.

These developments,



combined with growing medical tourism and advancements in surgical consumables, are expected to drive further growth in India's surgical market. The report showed a surge in surgical procedures, with approximately 82 per cent of procedures performed in small and medium hospitals.

The Indian surgical market is valued at approx-

imately \$55 billion, with continued growth driven by medical advancements and increased healthcare access. The report also highlighted the increased adoption of robotic-assisted surgery -- growing at a CAGR of 18 per cent, with the RAS market projected to reach \$680 million by FY29.

The market for surgical implants and disposables

is set to grow at a CAGR of 9.6 per cent to reach Rs 88,700 crore by 2030, with wound management emerging as the fastest-growing segment.

"India is at the brink of a surgical revolution, with an estimated 5.1 crore surgeries required annually to meet healthcare demands. The adoption of robotic-assisted surgeries is growing rapidly at an 18 per cent CAGR, and the surgical consumables market is projected to reach Rs 88,700 crore by 2030. These advancements are improving patient outcomes and increasing access to quality care," said Sanjay Sachdeva, Director - Healthcare and Lifesciences at 1Lattice.

Further, the report noted that despite the rapid growth, the sector faces challenges such as pricing pressures, regulatory complexities, and uneven distribution of specialist surgeons, particularly in rural areas.

## Study calls out against spine injections for chronic back pain

### AGENCIES

NEW DELHI, FEB 20

Adults with chronic back pain must not be given spine injections as they provide little or no pain relief compared with sham injections, according to an international study, published on Thursday.

A team of clinicians and patients from Canada, the US, and Australia strongly recommended against epidural steroid injections and nerve blocks for people living with chronic back pain (lasting at least three months) that is not associated with cancer, infection, or inflammatory arthritis.

Chronic back pain is the leading cause of disability worldwide -- estimated to affect one in five adults aged 20-59. Older adults tend to suffer more with the condition.

Epidural steroid injections, nerve blocks, and radiofrequency ablation (using radio waves to



destroy nerves) are widely used to stop pain signals from reaching the brain.

However, current guidelines provide conflicting recommendations for their use.

To probe, the team

compared the benefits and harms of 13 common interventional procedures, or combinations of procedures, for chronic, non-cancer spine pain against sham procedures. These include injections of such

as local anesthetic, steroids, or their combination; epidural injections, and radiofrequency ablations.

They analysed reviews of randomised trials and observational studies of these procedures.

Their recommendation, published in The BMJ, showed that there was no high-certainty evidence for any procedure or combination of procedures.

The low and moderate certainty evidence suggests "no meaningful relief for either axial pain (in a specific area of the spine) or radicular pain (radiating from the spine to the arms or legs) for spine injections compared with sham procedures", said the team, while strongly recommending against their use.

These procedures "are costly, a burden on patients, and carry a small risk of harm", they added, urging patients to avoid them.

## India sees over 30 pc decline in suicide death rates from 1990 to 2021: Lancet

### AGENCIES

NEW DELHI, FEB 20

India has seen a more than 30 per cent reduction in the suicide death rate in India from 1990 to 2021, according to a study published in The Lancet Public Health on Thursday, marking a significant progress in health strategies.

The analysis, based on the results from the Global Burden of Diseases, Injuries and Risk Factors Study (GBD) 2021, showed that the suicide death rate in India was 18.9 per lakh population in 1990, in 2019 it stood at 13.1 lakh per lakh population and 13 per lakh population in 2021.

From 1990 to 2021, the suicide death rate in India declined to 31.5 per cent.

The reduction in death rates by suicide was seen more in females than males. In 1990 suicide death rate among females stood at 16.8 per lakh population, which reduced to 10.3 per lakh population



in 2021.

On the other hand, the suicide death rate among men in 1990 stood at 20.9 per lakh population, and it reduced to 15.7 per lakh population by 2021.

"In 2020, in India, the highest suicide death rates were among educated women, with family problems being the most commonly cited contributing factor," said

the researchers from the Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation (IHME) at the University of Washington, US.

Globally, the study showed about 740,000 suicides are reported annually, in other words, one person dies on average every 43 seconds by suicide.

However, in the last three decades, the global

age-standardised mortality rate for suicide has declined by nearly 40 per cent -- from about 15 deaths per lakh population to 9 deaths per lakh population. This indicates that intervention and prevention strategies are working.

For females, the rate declined by more than 50 per cent, while it declined by almost 34 per cent for males. Overall, the mortality rate for suicide was 12.8 per lakh population for males and 5.4 per lakh population for females.

"While the progress made in declining suicide rates is encouraging, it is clear that suicide continues to impact some countries and populations more than others. Removing suicide stigma and barriers to access mental health support systems remain critical measures, particularly among people with mental and substance abuse disorders," said senior author Dr. Mohsen Naghavi with IHME.





## Japan reaches AFC U20 Asian Cup quarterfinals

AGENCIES

SHENZHEN, FEB. 20 (UND)

Japan secured the last ticket in the AFC U20 Asian Cup quarterfinals after drawing 1-1 with South Korea in the third round of Group D here on Thursday.

Soma Kanda opened the scoring for Japan in the 28th minute, only for substitute Kim Tae-won to find the equalizer for South Korea in the 91st minute.

South Korea topped the group with seven points and will meet defending champions Uzbekistan in the quarterfinals, while Japan will face Iran.

In the other match, Thanawut Phochai scored in the 73rd and 81st minute as Thailand came from two-goal behind to tie Syria 2-2.

## AFC U20 Asian Cup: Thailand hold Syria to 2-2 draw

Shenzhen (China), Feb 20 (IANS) Syria and Thailand shared honours at the AFC U20 Asian Cup China 2025 with a 2-2 draw in their final Group D match at the Longhua Cultural and Sports Centre Stadium on Thursday. Syria ended their campaign in third with two points while Thailand finished bottom, with Korea Republic topping the group following a 1-1 draw with Japan.

Thailand, who were playing for pride, had the first look at goal in the second minute when Yotsakon Burapha's close-range shot off a pass by Thanawut Phochai was saved by Syrian keeper Maksim Sarraf.

Syria responded in the eighth minute, Mohammad Al Mustafa out jumping two defenders in front of the goalmouth only to head straight into custodian Anut Samran's arms.

Anut made back-to-back saves in the 21st minute, first blocking Anas Al Dahhan's powerful shot from outside the box and then tipping the ball over the bar when Mustafa pounced on the rebound.

# Champions Trophy: Afghanistan v South Africa; when and where to watch

AGENCIES

KARACHI, FEB 20

Afghanistan will make their Champion Trophy debut against South Africa at the renovated National Stadium in Karachi on Wednesday. Led by Hashmatullah Shahidi, Afghanistan has developed a reputation for being the surprise package in global tournaments, having impressed in the 2023 ODI World Cup and the 2024 T20 World Cup.

Meanwhile, South Africa, captained by Temba Bavuma, boasts a powerful and dynamic batting lineup, making them strong contenders for the title despite recent inconsistencies in form.

Afghanistan and South Africa have faced each other five times in ODIs, with the Proteas leading the head-to-head 3-2. However, Afghanistan made history last year by securing their maiden ODI series win over South Africa, clinching a 2-1 victory in Sharjah.

The upcoming match marks Afghanistan's debut in the Champions Trophy, while South Africa will be



looking to overcome their history of near-misses in ICC events. Their most recent heartbreak came in the 2024 T20 World Cup final, where they narrowly lost to India. Notably, Afghanistan reached the semifinals in that tournament before falling to the Proteas. In the 2017 Champions Trophy, South Africa were eliminated in the group stage after rain denied them a semifinal spot.

South Africa's batting is bolstered by skipper Temba Bavuma, who averages 43.32 in ODIs, along

with Heinrich Klaasen and Rassie van der Dussen, both of whom boast averages above 44. Their bowling attack features Kagiso Rabada, with 162 ODI wickets at 27.56, and Marco Jansen, who took 17 scalps in the 2023 World Cup.

Afghanistan, on the other hand, has several in-form players, including Azmatullah Omarzai, who averaged 50-plus with the bat and under 21 with the ball in 2024, earning him the ODI Player of the Year award.

Match details: Where and when to watch

Time: The AFG vs SA match will happen on Friday at 2.30 pm with the toss at 2 pm (IST).

Venue: The match will be played at National Cricket Stadium, Karachi.

Broadcast: The match will be broadcast on TV on Star Sports and Network 18 channels. The AFG vs SA match will be live-streamed on JioHotstar.

Squads:

Afghanistan: Hashmatullah Shahidi (c), Ibrahim Zadran, Rahmanullah Gurbaz, Sediqullah Atal, Rahmat Shah, Ikram Alikhil, Gulbadin Naib, Azmatullah Omarzai, Mohammad Nabi, Rashid Khan, Nangyal Kharoti, Noor Ahmad, Fazalhaq Farooqi, Farid Malik, Naveed Zadran

South Africa: Temba Bavuma (c), Tony de Zorzi, Marco Jansen, Heinrich Klaasen, Keshav Maharaj, Aiden Markram, David Miller, Wiaan Mulder, Lungi Ngidi, Kagiso Rabada, Ryan Rickelton, Tabraiz Shamsi, Tristan Stubbs, Rassie van der Dussen, Corbin Bosch

Travelling reserve: Kwena Maphaka

## Fakhar Zaman ruled out of Champions Trophy 2025



AGENCIES

NEW DELHI, FEB 20

Fakhar Zaman, the Pakistan opening batter, has been ruled out of the remainder of the Champions Trophy 2025 after sustaining a oblique injury during the tournament opener against New Zealand. Pakistan have named Imam-ul-Haq as his replacement.

Zaman had to leave the field only two deliveries into the match against New Zealand after injuring himself while fielding. After opener Will Young played a Shaheen Afridi delivery through covers, Zaman pursued the ball and managed to stop it from crossing the boundary but got injured in the process.

Zaman later returned to the field during the latter stages of the first innings but couldn't open

the innings later considering the lengthy time off the field. Even when he came out to bat at No.4, he struggled with running between the wickets. He scored 24 off 41 in a 47-run stand off 65 deliveries with Babar Azam, with the latter also struggling to up the ante.

Pakistan, who were chasing a target of 320, fell short as they went down by 60 runs in the opener. The defending CT champions play their next match, against arch-rivals India, on February 23 followed by their final Group A game against Bangladesh in Rawalpindi on February 27.

Meanwhile, 29-year-old Imam hasn't played for Pakistan since 2023 and last played the ODI format at the World Cup that year. In all, he has played 72 ODIs and scored 3138 runs at 48.27.

## Olympic movement always emphasizes unity, solidarity: IOC president Bach

AGENCIES

BEIJING, FEB. 20 (UND)

Reflecting on his Olympic journey, International Olympic Committee (IOC) president Thomas Bach says the key mission of the Olympic movement is to unite people with solidarity in a peaceful competition.

Bach will step down as IOC president in June after having served 12 years in the role.

An Olympic fencing champion at Montreal 1976, Bach said that various political boycotts against the Olympics in the 1980s prompted him to engage himself in sports management.

"It is very special for me that none of the Olympic Games I have been presiding [over] had any boycott," Bach told Xinhua, adding that despite many geopolitical tensions before Paris 2024, the IOC



was able to gather athletes from 206 countries and regions and the IOC Refugee Olympic Team.

Elected IOC president in 2013, Bach acknowledged that he had regrets in sometimes being too impatient to drive changes forward, adding that greater explanation and clarity could have been given.

"In order to be really

united, you have to understand the needs and circumstances of others, and you have to be ready to help others and accept help," Bach noted. "We have to organize the Games in a way contributing to a better society in every respect. We are not an island in the society, so we have to be in dialogue with society."

He added, "We are already about to increase the financial stability and strengthen it by having new partners and extending partnerships, which are in a robust situation where we need to make changes more on technical side with regard to sponsor recognition."

Seven candidates are running to succeed Bach as IOC president - Juan Antonio Samaranch Jr., Sebastian Coe, Prince Feisal Al Hussein, Kirsty Coventry, Johan Eliasch, David Lappartient, and Morinari Watanabe.

For his successor, Bach stressed the importance of keeping the Olympic movement united and relevant to the world. "To maintain the universality of the Olympic Games, you have to stay politically neutral. Sometimes it is not easy, but you have to withstand this pressure."

## F1: Lewis Hamilton feels invigorated ahead of new F1 season for Ferrari

AGENCIES

LONDON, FEB 20 (UND)

Lewis Hamilton says he feels "full of life" and "invigorated" as he prepares to start his new Ferrari adventure this season.

The seven-time world champion made the comments in front of his adoring fans at F1's official launch shows in London's O2 Arena on Tuesday, the CNN report.

Hamilton received a huge cheer as he walked out on stage with team-

mate Charles Leclerc and Ferrari team principal Frédéric Vasseur. It was also a chance for Ferrari fans to see the new design for this season's car.

"The word that I am thinking of is invigorated because I feel so full of life and so much energy because everything is new," a beaming Hamilton said to the crowd.

"(I am) just focused on what's up ahead. I'm so proud to be part of the team, something new and exciting for me."

Hamilton (40) shocked the sport last year when it was announced he would be joining the Italian outfit this season, after spending 12 years at Mercedes.

He has since said that joining Ferrari has been like realizing his dream.

The British driver will now link up with Leclerc, as the team looks for its first driver's world title since 2007.

"If I have to choose one word, I was going to say fulfillment - fulfilling my childhood dream of becom-

ing a Formula 1 world champion," Leclerc said when asked to chose one word for the upcoming season.

"But I think the one that fits better is probably honoured - honoured to be part of this team.

"It's been a dream of mine since being a child, growing up with the red dream. I'm living the dream and I'm just super honoured to be part of this team. I'm really, really looking forward to hopefully writing history alongside Lewis (Hamilton)."

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