**Srinagar SATURDAY FEBRUARY 22** | 2025 23 | Shabaan 1446 Issue No: 47 Volume: 15



**Speaker LA reviews progress** on new Legislative Assembly **Complex** 

**Javed Dar reviews** functioning of Horticulture deptt; highlights sectors' huge employment



## Will Definitely Live Up to the Expectations of Our People in Five Years: CM Omar Abdullah

HT NEWS NETWORK

Srinagar, Feb 21: Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Friday said his government would make attempts to live up to the expectations of the people but all issues cannot be addressed in one go.Jammu travel guide

"I know people have expectations (from us) and it will be our endeavour to live up to those. But you should also realise that people have given us five years' time (mandate). It cannot be that all the demands can be fulfilled in the first budget itself.

"A good start will be made and we will try to lay a foundation on which we will continue to build upon for the next five years and resolve the problems and demands of the people," Abdullah told reporters here.



Asked about the brigade commanderlevel flag meeting between India and Pakistan along the Line of Control in Poonch district on Friday, the chief minister called it a good move to ease tension.

"The aim of the flag meeting was to decrease tension without using any force," he said.India and Pakistan on Friday held

#### **Chief Minister Omar Abdullah reviews** functioning of Raabita office

■ HT News Network/KNT

SRINAGAR, FEBRUARY 21: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah today chaired a review meeting of the CM's Public Services and Outreach Office, Raabita, in Srinagar to assess its functioning and strengthen its role in addressing public grievances effectively.During the meeting, the Chief Minister directed that Raabita Nodal Officers be designated at the district level to ensure prompt and efficient handling of public issues. TURN ON.....PAGE 02

Investments in J&K must have land investment safeguards, create jobs for local youth: CM

■ HT News Network/KNT

SRINAGAR, FEBRUARY 21: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah today here attended the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) Jammu & Kashmir Annual Session-2025 titled "AMAZING J&K: Aspiring For New Growth Goals".

The event, organized by the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) J&K Council, brought together business leaders, industrialists, entrepreneurs, and other stakeholders to discuss strategic actions to boost J&K's

TURN ON.....PAGE 02

### **India, Pak Armies agree** to uphold Feb 2021 ceasefire agreement

Hold flag meeting in Poonch to ease tension along LoC, International Border

**■** HT News Network/KNT

Poonch, Feb 21,: In an effort to defuse rising tensions along the Line of Control (LoC), India and Pakistan held a brigade commander-level  $flag\,meeting\,at\,the\,Chakkan-Da-Bagh\,crossing$ point in Jammu and Kashmir's Poonch district on Friday, official sources said.

The 75-minute meeting, which began at 11 AM, was conducted in a "congenial atmosphere," with both sides emphasizing the importance of maintaining peace along the border, sources added. The commanders reaffirmed their commitment to upholding the ceasefire agreement in the interest of stability in the region.

This high-level engagement comes in the wake of recent ceasefire violations, including incidents of cross-border firing and an impro-

#### **NEWS BRIEF**

Police seize vehicle of drug peddler under **NDPS Act in Srinagar** 

■ HT News Network

Srinagar, Feb 21 (UNI) Jammu and Kashmir Police has attached a vehicle of a drug peddler under Narco Act in Srinagar, Police said on Friday.

Police said the vehicle of drug peddler identified as Javid Ahmad Wani, a resident of Gasoo valued at approximately Rs 1.5 lakhs and acquired through the sale of illicit drugs was seized. TURN ON.....PAGE 02

Specially abled person charred to death in **Baramulla** 

HT News Network

Srinagar, Feb 21 (UNI) A 24-yearold specially-abled man was charred to death in a fire incident that broke out overnight in Jammu and Kashmir's Baramulla district, officials said on Friday. They said the blaze erupted around 4 am in a single-story house in Binner Batpora, trapping the victim, identified as Zubair Ahmad. The flames spread rapidly, preventing family members from rescuing him.

The deceased's body has been shifted to Government Medical College Baramulla for medico-legal for-TURN ON.....PAGE 02

**Blaze Engulfs Three Houses, Commercial building in Old Srinagar** 

**■ HT News Network** 

Srinagar, Feb 21: A devastating fire engulfed three residential houses and a five-storey residential-cumcommercial building in the Malaratha area of old Srinagar city, causing massive damage to property worth crores. Local sources said that the fire broke out in one of the houses and quickly spread, consuming the multi-storied structures. Firefighters rushed to the spot TURN ON.....PAGE 02 and battled

Iltija Mufti to Launch **Signature Campaign for** Alcohol Ban in J&K

**■** HT News Network

Srinagar, Feb 21: Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) leader Iltija Mufti has announced a signature campaign advocating for a ban on alcohol in Jammu and Kashmir, citing its detrimental effects on families and society.

The campaign is set to be launched on Saturday at the PDP office in Srinagar between 11 AM and 2 PM, aiming to mobilize pub-

TURN ON.....PAGE 02

### **Create An Action Plan For Rehabilitation of Degraded Forests: CS**

**HT News Network** 

**NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 21:** Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo, today chaired a meeting of the Forest, Ecology & Environment Department to assess its functioning besides reviewing the progress on ongoing conservation measures for protection of lakes and wetlands in the Union Territory.

During the meeting, the Chief Secretary directed the officers to frame a comprehensive action plan based on scientific principles for rehabilitation of degraded forest areas within a stipulated



land management, the Chief secretary instruct- cation of forest lands by installing boundary

time frame. To enhance the efficiency of forest ed the officials to expedite the survey and demar-

pillars and digitizing the records. This step aims to effectively curb encroachments and safeguard forest resources, he maintained. Focusing on afforestation efforts, Dulloo asked the department to accelerate the plantation drives to meet the ambitious target of planting 1.5 crore saplings by the end of the upcoming plantation season. He stressed that achieving this goal without any delay was imperative for environmental sustainability. He emphasized the need for ensuring maximum survival of planted saplings by adopting protective measures, including fencing of reforested areas. TURN ON.....PAGE 02

#### **Frequent Drunken Incidents Prompt Srinagar Traders to Urge Tourists Against Alcohol**

■ HT News Network

**Srinagar, Feb 21**, : Traders in Srinagar's bustling city center, Lal Chowk, have issued an appeal to visiting tourists, welcoming them with open arms while urging them to refrain from consuming liquor and drugs. The Traders Association, Central Lal Chowk, has installed signboards and billboards carrying a message encouraging responsible tourism and respect for local culture. The newly installed signboards read: "Welcome, Dear Tourists. The Traders Association, Central Lal Chowk, invites you to experience the beauty of our heaven on earth! For a memorable and enjoyable trip, we kindly request: Love and cherish your family. Avoid liquor, drugs, spitting on roads, and smoking.

TURN ON.....PAGE 02

### **IGP Birdi chairs high-level security** review meeting in north Kashmir

**HT News Network** 

Srinagar, Feb 21 (UNI) Inspector General of Police (IGP), Kashmir V K Birdi, chaired a high-level joint security review meeting in Baramulla, focusing on strengthening coordination and operational efficiency

between security forces. Birdi visited Baramulla on Thursday to assess the joint security preparedness and operational capabilities of the Jammu and Kashmir



Police and the Central

Reserve Police Force (CRPF). During his visit, IGP Birdi chaired a high-level joint security review meeting at Baramulla, focusing on enhanced coordination, joint

resource utilisation, and operational efficiency, a police spokesman said. The meeting was attended

by senior officers from the Police and CRPF, who deliberated on joint deployment strategies, operational preparedness, and emerging security challenges.

The IGP commended the efforts of both forces in maintaining law and order and stressed the need for continued collaboration

TURN ON.....PAGE 02

#### **30-hr Water Shutdown:** JSD keeps stock of 2.61 lakh liters available for consumers

■ HT News Network

Srinagar, Feb 21: Ahead of the 30-hour water shutdown, the Jal Shakti Department (JSD) has kept over 2.61 liters of water stock available for the consumers in the areas where the water supply would remain affected from today.

A top official in the JSD told the news agency-that 15 water tanks with the capacity of 9,000 liters each have already been kept available for the consumers while additional 14 water tankers

TURN ON.....PAGE 02

### Tulip Garden becomes 'goldmine' for J&K Govt, generates over Rs 14 cr revenue in 1-year

**HT News Network/KNT** 

Srinagar, Feb 21: The famous Tulip Garden, located at the foothills of the Zabarwan Mountains here, is proving to be a 'goldmine' for the Jammu and Kashmir Government.

According to the official documents accessed by the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO)



the garden generated Rs 14.35 crore revenue in the year 2024, an all-time

high since it was first inaugurated in 2007 by then J&K Chief Minister Ghulam Nabi Azad.Notably, UPA Chairperson Sonia Gandhi was among the first to enter into the garden in 2007, buying a ticket for Rs 50 out of her own pocket.

The documents reveal that the garden's revenue has seen a steady increase over the years. In 2020-21,

TURN ON.....PAGE 02

### **Kashmir: Precipitation brings** slight respite, Jhelum's level increases; **Achabal Spring refurbished**

MeT issues yellow alert from Feb 25, predicts 4-day wet spell

HT News Network/KNS

**Srinagar, Feb 21**: Fresh precipitation has brought some respite as it has led to increase in the water level in river Jhelum and its tributaries. Rains and snow have also refurbished Achabal Spring in South Kashmir.

According to the data accessed by the news agency-Kashmir News Observer (KNO), Jhelum's level at Sangam increased from -1.05 ft at 5:00 PM on Thursday to -0.74 ft at 5:00 PM on Friday.

At Ram Munshi Bagh, the level increased from 3.44ft from last evening to 3.54 ft till this evening, it added.

The water level of river Jhelum is below zero at multiple stations, the data states, adding that Rambiyara, Lidder and Pohro Nallas were among the streams that were flowing below zero level on Friday eve-

ACHABAL SPRING REFURBISHED The historic Achabal spring in South Kashmir's Anantnag District has come to life again after it had dried up. The spring has rejuvenated as it has returned to its original state again.

Pertinently, the majority of places across Kashmir received rainfall during



According to the details, Batote and Bhaderwah recorded the highest precipitation of 48 mm and 41 mm respectively.

As per the details, Srinagar, the summer capital of Jammu and Kashmir, recorded a rainfall of 11.4 mm in the last 24 hours. Kokernag recorded 27.2 mm rainfall during the period while 7.8 mm rainfall and 7.0 cm of snowfall were recorded in the last 24 hours at Gulmarg.

Above 14 mm rainfall was recorded in Pahalgam and Qazigund in the last 24 hours, the data reads, adding that 9.8 mm rainfall was recorded in Kupwara during the period.

Jammu district recorded a precipitation of 27.4 mm during the period while Banihal recorded 38.9mm rainfall since

### **International Mother Language Day** Make Kashmiri subject compulsory upto class 10th, demands KLU

HT News Network/JKNS

Srinagar, Feb 21: On International Mother Language Day, the Kashmiri Language Union (KLU) Friday urged the government to fill all the vacant posts of Kashmiri teachers and make the subject compulsory upto 10th stan-

Speaking to the news agency-Kashmir News Observer (KNO), the union members demanded gov-



protecting Kashmiri language and stressed on the

to fill vacant positions of Kashmiri language educa-

peaceful protest at Shere-Kashmir Park here to press for their demands. Majid Ganaie, a union

tors.The union held a

member said that under National Education Policy (NEP), steps have been taken for the promotion of Kashmir language but things mentioned in the policy aren't being fulfilled on ground.

He said that there aren't special educators available the last 24 hours. TURN ON.....PAGE 02

**CMYK** 

### **CONTINUE FROM FRONT PAGE.....**

#### **TEACHER**

The accused was involved in case FIR No. 27/24 U/S 8/20, 21 NDPS (Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances) Act of Police Station

"The property was seized under the provisions of section 68 F of the NDPS Act with confirmation from the administrator and competent authority SAFEMA (Smugglers and Foreign Exchange Manipulators-Forfeiture of Property Act), New Delhi.", police said.

J&K Police reaffirms its commitment to protecting the community from the dangers of drug abuse and pledge to continue taking stringent action against those involved in this illegal trade.

"Public cooperation is crucial in this fight, and anyone with information about drug-related activities is urged to contact the nearest police station", police said.

#### **DEATH**

Authorities are investigating the cause of the fire.In another devastating fire incident that broke out at Malarutta Bohri Kadal in downtown Srinagar, a five-story commercial building and three residential houses were gutted during

The fire spread rapidly, engulfing the structures before fire fighting teams managed to bring it under control.

#### **FIRE**

the flames, eventually bringing the blaze

Although no casualties have been reported, the inferno has left several families homeless and businesses in ruins. The cause of the fire is yet to be ascertained, and police have started an investigation into the incident. All the three residential houses damaged in the incident were three storey structures. While another was a residential cum commercial building housing shops and offices.

Local residents have urged authorities to provide immediate relief to the affected families, as many have lost their homes and livelihoods in the tragedy. [KNT]

#### MUFTI

upport for the proposed legislation.

Taking to social media, Iltija Mufti expressed deep concern over the rising impact of alcohol and drug abuse in the region. "Alcohol and drugs are wrecking lives and families in J&K. We must come together to put an end to it before it's too late," she stated, urging people to participate in the campaign.

The initiative comes as PDP legislator Mir Muhammad Fayaz has already submitted a bill in the Jammu and Kashmir Assembly seeking a complete ban on alcohol consumption. The bill is expected to be presented during the upcoming Budget session. Additionally, National Conference legislator Ahsan Pardesi has also submitted a similar bill, indicating growing political momentum on

The call for an alcohol ban has sparked discussions among political and social circles, with supporters emphasizing its potential benefits for public health and social stability. [KNT]

#### CM

meeting in an effort to ease tension after several recent incidents of cross-border firing and an IED attack.

The meeting, which started around 11 am and laster for 75 minutes, took place in the Chakkan-Da-Bagh crossing point area wherein both sides highlighted the need to maintain peace along the borders.

#### **OMAR**

He stressed the need for a proactive approach in reaching out to people, ensuring that government initiatives and grievance redressal mechanisms are accessible to every citizen.

A detailed presentation was given on the office's working, highlighting key achievements and ongoing initiatives aimed at enhancing public service delivery. The Chief Minister reiterated his government's unwavering commitment to a transparent, accountable, and people-centric administration. He instructed officials to adopt a more responsive and resultoriented approach, ensuring that grievances are resolved in a time-bound manner. He emphasized on improving the quality of disposal of public grievances and to ensure that grievances are actually resolved when updating the final disposal of each grievance.

Emphasizing the importance of direct engagement with citizens, the Chief Minister directed officials to increase outreach efforts through awareness campaigns, interactive public sessions, and digital platforms. He assured that his government remains committed to listening to people's concerns and taking concrete steps to resolve them.

Meanwhile, Group of Concerned Citizens (GCC) delegation led by former IAS officer Khurshid Ahmad Ganai called on the Chief Minister at Raabita office and expressed their concern over the proposed amendments being contemplated in the Unified Building Bye Laws (UBBL). The GCC members requested CM to review the

proposed UBBL amendments & urban planning policies which have been initiated by Housing & Urban Development Department just before the elected Government assumed office in October.

The Chief Minister listened to their objections and said that his Government would examine the objections and scrutinize other urban development policies before approving any such policy and said that all stakeholders shall be consulted before firming up such policies or bringing any legislation to that effect.

#### YOUTH

economic growth and development, driving the region's competitiveness and business potential through a robust and resilient industrial and sustainable entrepreneurship ecosys-

Addressing the session, the Chief Minister emphasized that such interactions are pivotal to enhancing efficiency, competitiveness, and creating business opportunities for industries through a range of specialized services and strategic global linkages. It also provides a platform for consensus-building and networking on key issues.

The Chief Minister sought suggestions and valuable insights from the participating entrepreneurs and other stakeholders that can be incorporated into the upcoming budget of Jammu and Kashmir for the overall welfare and benefit of the public, as well as for industries, tourism, and other sectors.

Chief Minister Omar Abdullah emphasized the need for responsible entrepreneurial practices to foster an economic ecosystem that ensures sustainability across J&K.

While advocating for expanding investments in J&K, the Chief Minister underscored that such investments must be regulated by laws protecting the agricultural land and having land investment safeguards, like in Himachal Pradesh which has put reasonable restrictions and at the same time it would ensure jobs for local vouth.

The Chief Minister noted that Himachal Pradesh has adopted a strict policy in this regard and stressed the adoption of a similar policy in

He commended the resilience of J&K's industry, acknowledging businesses that have endured challenging times without solely relying on government subsidies. He stressed the importance of ensuring long-term business sustainability, proposing a mechanism to track businesses' viability beyond ten years.

On the ease of doing business, the Chief Minister advocated for a genuine single-window clearance system, addressing concerns over bureaucratic hurdles, particularly in obtaining clearances from forest and environment boards, which hinder manufacturing growth.

He encouraged stakeholders to provide suggestions and feedback for the upcoming budget, reinforcing the Government's commitment to an industry-friendly policy framework.

Minister for Food, Civil Supplies & Consumer Affairs, Satish Sharma, who attended the event as Guest of Honour, also spoke at the event. He emphasized the need to address past deficiencies and underscored the importance of promoting sports tourism, health tourism, and border tourism while leveraging Kashmir's renowned hospitality through innovative marketing strategies.

Madhav Singhania, Joint Managing Director & CEO, JK Cements Limited & Chairman, Confederation of Indian Industry, Northern Region; Syed Junaid Altaf Group Executive Director, FIL Industries Pvt. Ltd. & Chairman, CII J&K; Dr. M. A. Alim Director, Package Design Industries & Vice Chairman CII J&K were also present on the occasion.

#### **IGP**

to strengthen the region's security framework. IGP Birdi also reviewed operational readiness and capabilities of Special Operations Group (SOG). He expressed satisfaction with their high level of training and professionalism, acknowledging their critical role in counter-terror operations. Discussions also included the summer operation strategy, outlining key security tactics and contingency plans for the upcoming

Speaking on the occasion, IGP Birdi praised the dedication and professionalism of the personnel, emphasising the importance of sustained collaboration and proactive measures to coun-

ter evolving security challenges. The visit was attended by CRPFIG Operations Mitesh Jain, Deputy Inspector General Police North Kashmir Maqsood-ul-Zaman, DIG CRPF R S Rawat, SSP Baramulla Gurinderpal Singh, SP Sopore Divya D, SSP Bandipora Harmeet Singh-JKPS, SSP Kupwara Ghulam Jeelani-, SP Handwara Mushtaq Ahmad, and other security officials deployed in North Kashmir.

#### **TOURISTS**

Respect our culture and traditions. Stay blessed and enjoy your time in our enchanting

Speaking to the news agency Kashmir News Trust (KNT), Bilal Ahmad, President, Traders Association, said the initiative was taken after frequent incidents of tourists consuming alcohol in the area and engaging in fighting, par-

ticularly with their families. "Frequently, shopkeepers in Lal Chowk witness drunk tourists quarreling with their families. Women and children are left in distress, often seen crying and traumatized. As hosts, we welcome all visitors, but we strongly urge them to avoid alcohol consumption to ensure a peaceful and pleasant environment for everyone." Bilal Ahmad said.

The association's General Secretary, Shirar Ahmad Mir, also endorsed the move, stating that maintaining the cultural ethos of the city while providing a safe and enjoyable experience for all tourists is a shared responsibility.

The traders hope that their message will foster responsible tourism and encourage visitors to respect the traditions of Kashmir while enjoying their stay in the Valley. [KNT]

#### **JSD**

with the capacity of 9,000 liters have been brought from different areas to ensure that the consumers in the affected areas would not face any hardships.

"In order to cater the needs of people in the next 30 hours from tomorrow, we have made available a total of 29 water tankers with 9,000 liters each. We will ensure that nobody faces inconvenience in the next 30 hours from (Saturday)," he said.

The 29 water tankers having a capacity of 2.61 lakh liters water has been stocked for the

Pertinently, the Executive Engineer Water Works Division Srinagar had on last Tuesday issued an "urgent public notice" regarding a 30-hour shutdown of the Sindh Power Canal HEP Old Ganderbal and desilting of the Forebay.

As per the Urgent Public Notice, this shutdown is scheduled to take place from '22nd to 23rd February 2025' as part of necessary repair work by the Department of Civil Investigation & DesignWing, JKPDC.

As a result of this work, raw water supply to the Water Treatment Plants of Nishat, Alusteng, and Rangil will be severely impacted. Consequently, potable water supply will be affected in major parts of Srinagar City and surrounding

The advisory also reads, the affected areas include: Zakoora, Gulab Bagh, Alusteng, Shuhama, Hadoora, Chatterhama, Khalmulla, Habak, Naseem Bagh, Busserbagh, Malla Bagh, Pandach, Buchpora, Soura, Anchar, Bohlouhpora, Zoonimar, Nowshera, Bagh I Ali Mardan Khan, Zadibal, Hawal, Alamgari Bazar, Rajouri Kadal, Nallahmar, Nawakadal, Bohori Kadal, Nowhatta, Lal Bazar, Hazratbal, Sadribal, Nigeen, Saida Kadal, Rainawari, Khanyar, Khayam, Nowpora, Dalgate, Konkhan, Gagribal, Nehru Park, Dal areas, Brein, Gupkar, Sonwar, Indra Nagar, Shivpora, Batwara, Pandrethan, Lal Chowk, Court road, Residency Road, M.A road, Bishembar Nagar, Babademb, Fateh Kadal, Barbarshah, Fateh Kadal, Habba Kadal, Gow Kadal, Shaheed Gunj, Karan Nagar, Kakasarai, Balgarden, Chattabal, Kawdara, Eidgah, Mahrajgunj, Zaina Kadal, Saidpora, Bemina, Firdous Abad, Parts of Batmaloo, Qamarwari, ZainaKoot, Noorabad, Umerabad, and adiacent areas.

The advisory also reads the general public is hereby notified through the medium of this notice to store a sufficient supply of water to meet the demands. Furthermore, the hospitals functioning in and around Srinagar City are requested to keep close liaison with the PHE authorities during the shutdown period. For any complaints/grievances regarding scarcity/ shortage of water supply, the general public is requested to contact the PHE Provincial Control Room, which remains functional round the clock for the service of the general public.

It reads that the contact numbers of the provincial control room are: 0194-2477207, 0194-2452047 (Landline Numbers), and WhatsApp Numbers: 9419413914, 9419413915—

#### DAY

in the schools, so Kashmiri is often taught by teachers of other subjects, who are unable to do justice with it.

Dr Rifat said that due to unknown reasons, people in Kashmir feel disgrace in speaking Kashmiri language and "why a child is being taught other languages when he is still in the cradle and it seems we ourselves have been degrading our language.'

She said that Kashmiri language is the identity of the people and it needs to be preserved. Ashiq Hussian Lone, another member of the

association said that every year 200-300 students have been completing their post graduate in Kashmiri and if government won't take up recruitment process for scholars of Kashmiri, where will they go and then who will show inclination towards the mother language as so far no recruitment has taken place.

He claimed that around 5000 posts of Kashmir subject are lying vacant in the school education department and they need to be filled at an earliest. "If up to 8th class Kashmiri subjects are compulsory, the question here is who teaches Kashmiri language in schools," he said.

Bilal Ahmad Lone, another scholar, said that this language is facing challenges at public and government level.

He said that parents too are responsible for this as they prefer to teach their beloved the other languages. He said that everybody needs to take steps for the promotion of the language.

Union members said that they have brought these issues to the notice of LG Manoj Sinha and CM Omar Abdullah and they are hopeful of

positive steps in this regard.

**HT - NEWS** 

They have once again requested concerned authorities to look into the matter at an earliest and take immediate steps in this regard—(KNO)

#### **WEATHER**

Katra witnessed a precipitation of 27.7 mm during the period.

Furthermore, the weatherman has predicted another wet spell this week.

MET PREDICTS 4-DAY WET SPELL

A four-day yellow alert has been issued by the local Meteorological Department from February 25 in Jammu and Kashmir divisions. With the forecast of dry weather conditions

for next three days, Director Meteorological department (MeT), Dr Mukhtar Ahmad said that there is a possibility of light to moderate rain and snow at most places with isolated heavy rain and snow over both Kashmir division & Jammu division from February 25 to February 28-(KNO)

Highlighting the ecological importance of wetlands, the Chief Secretary underscored their crucial role in the ecosystem and called for rigorous conservation efforts. He directed the officials to ensure proper demarcation and protection of wetlands, alongwith improving water quality and other relevant parameters to enhance their sustainability.

Regarding Wular Lake conservation, the Chief Secretary instructed both the Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (PCCF) and the Commissioner Secretary, Forests to personally visit the site. They were asked to review the status of the ongoing conservation works and devise a mechanism to accelerate their execution. He observed that Wular Lake, being Asia's largest freshwater lake, necessitates urgent and effective conservation measures and has a scope of attracting a large number of tourists.

Regarding the conservation of Kishtwar High Altitude National Park, the Chief Secretary emphasized the need for increased manpower  $and furthering \, efforts \, to \, achieve \, tangible \, results.$ He pointed out that the scale of work required exceeds the current workforce, necessitating moving of additional resources on the ground for meeting the objectives set for its mitigation.

Additionally, the Chief Secretary stressed the early approval and implementation of the Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) in coordination with other departments. He instructed for formation of an inter-departmental coordination panel responsible for ensuring smooth execution of the plan by aligning available funds with the envisioned schemes.

Commissioner Secretary, FE&E, Sheetal Nanda, presented an overview of the functioning of the department. She informed that besides protection and conservation of forests, the department carries out rehabilitation of degraded forests, urban area afforestation, maintenance of national parks and wildlife sanctuaries besides looking after the wetlands, pollution control and biodiversity conservation in J&K.

She also apprised of some of the major achievements of the department registered during the past year and the plans for years ahead regarding development of Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP), plantation of around 1.5 crore saplings, demarcation of forest land besides other works.

In his presentation, Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (PCCF), Suresh Kumar Gupta, highlighted that the UT has a forest area of around 20,194 sq km (47.8 % of Geographical area) with a tree cover of 151.8 million trees as per Draft ToF Report, 2023.

Regarding the UT level BAP, he informed the meeting that it establishes a general framework as per the guidelines of the National Biodiversity Authority (NBA), on current and future policies regarding conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity.

The department wise budget requirements have been worked out for eleven themes comprising 38 strategies involving a list of 161 activities. The overall budget by dovetailing of resources across different schemes implemented by various departments comes to Rs 187.8 crore per year upto 2030, he revealed.

Regarding plantation programme, the PCCF divulged that a total of 81.27 lakh saplings had been planted till January this year covering an area of 5703 ha. He further revealed that an area of 2150 sq km (as on 2019) had been prioritized as degraded forests, of which, 775 sq km had been treated during the last 5 years and the balance area to be treated is 1,375 sq km with an additional support of Rs. 78 crore per year for next 10 years. It was revealed that establishment of Nagar Vans in 42 ULBs (out of 80) had been achieved with rest to be done in coming

Regarding the survey and demarcation of forest area, it was added that out of the total of 300853 Boundary Pillars (BPs), 142144 had been renovated/ reinstalled. It was informed that survey of all the remaining BPs would be completed by December 2025 and the fixing of the same is set to be completed by March 2027.

The Chairman, Pollution Control Committee, gave details of monitoring of lakes, wetlands, rivers, ground water and other water bodies.

About Wular Lake conservation, the CEO, WUCMA revealed that demarcation of 84 km long Wular boundary has been completed with geo-tagged Boundary Pillars (1159 Nos). It was further added that out of 44 Km of bund consolidation in encroachment prone peripheral areas 11 km have been completed with a dredging of 5 sq km critically silted area till date.

While discussing the environment management plan of the Kishtwar High Altitude National Park, it was projected that it includes Wildlife Mitigation Plan for Rs. 236.00 crore (including 100 crore corpus), Catchment Area Treatment plan (CAT) for Rs. 44.00 crore and Biodiversity Conservation Management Plan for Rs. 18.00

The meeting was apprised that the Department of wildlife protection looks after 10 other wetlands in both Jammu and Kashmir divisions. These included Hokersar, Shallabugh, Hygam, Mirgund, Chatllalum, Kranchoo, Manibugh, Freshkoori in Kashmir and Surinsar-Mansar and Gharana wetlands in Jammu division.

#### **TULIP**

it generated Rs 2.49 crores, followed by Rs 6.70 crores in 2021-22. The revenue rose to Rs 13.46 crores in 2022-23 and reached an estimated Rs 14.35 crores in the last financial year (2023-24). This revenue was generated from entry tickets, permissions for videography, and the sale of plant material.

Notably, the Tulip Garden, a visual spectacle of vibrant colors, showcased 1.7 million flowers this year, including 73 varieties of tulips, hyacinths, daffodils, and other spring blooms.

The 2023-24 season witnessed an unprecedented 4.46 lakh visitors, comprising local, national, and international tourists, marking an all-time high in the garden's history.

The Tulip Show has become a gateway for tourism in the Kashmir Valley, attracting visitors from across the globe. The event not only provides a glimpse of the region's natural beauty but also serves as a platform for local businesses, including hotels, transport services, and handicraft vendors, to thrive.

Officials attribute the record-breaking footfall and revenue to improved infrastructure, better marketing strategies, and the growing reputation of the Tulip Garden as a must-visit destination. "The garden's strategic location adds to its value. We are hopeful about attracting more visitors this season than last year," an official from the Department of Floriculture told KNO-(KNO)

#### JNU holds seminar on life, legacy of Masud Choudhary

Javed Rana recalls Dr Choudhary's contribution in creation of a just, inclusive society

NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 21: Minister for Jal Shakti, Forest, Ecology & Environment and Tribal Affairs, Javed Ahmed Rana, today stated that the vision of Dr Masud Ahmed Choudhary transcended narrow identities and parochial politics, advocating for creation of a just and inclusive society.

He was speaking during a seminar titled "Inclusive Approach to the Tribal Identity of Jammu and Kashmir - A Tribute Honouring the Life and Legacy of Dr Masud Ahmed Choudhary", organised by the Centre of Excellence for Tribal Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU), New Delhi.

Rana, who was special guest on the occasion, said that Dr Choudhary was an embodiment of a fight against the narrow politics of caste and tribe. "He strived all his life to build an inclusive society free from caste, class, ethnic and religious discrimination based on equality and fraternity. He was an outstanding leader and a staunch crusader for the rights of down-trodden and backward sections of the society", maintained the Minister.

The Minister, while paying tributes to the legend, remembered Dr. Choudhary as a guiding force and a visionary who worked with conviction and dedication all his life for the upliftment of the marginalized. "He fought for his people and his community to make their dream of living with dignity, a reality. We are indebted to his service for shaping our understanding of the past, present and future," he said while expressing gratitude to the INU for hosting the seminar.

Calling him an icon of social reform and education, Rana said that it would be a befitting tribute to carry forward the legacy of a personality who played a pivotal role in founding institutions like Baba Ghulam Shah Badshah University (BGSBU) and Gurjar Desh Charitable Trust (GDCT) that are positively impacting thousands of lives.

Highlighting the contributions of Masud Choudhary, Rana said that he founded the GDCT and published the magazine 'Awaz e Gujjar' to raise social and educational awareness. "GDCT serves as a museum and archive of the Gujjar and Bakarwal community in Jammu and Kashmir. At a time of vehement modernisation of life and culture of traditional tribes, the trust is one of the rare private and community-led initiatives to preserve our shared and collective heritage," he said.

Rana impressed upon the audience that in contemporary times, when people are increasingly divided based on their identity, caste, region, ethnicity, it becomes incumbent upon us to collectively fight the evils and wrongs ailing our society.Rana said that the philosophy and life of Dr Choudhary is a profile of courage and conviction, whose work and commitment to the people of Jammu and Kashmir, particularly the Gujjar and Bakarwal tribes.

## **Javed Dar reviews functioning of Horticulture** deptt; highlights sectors' huge employment potential

### **Emphasizes high tech cultivation for enhanced economic prospects**

#### **HT News Network**

SRINAGAR, FEBRUARY 21: Minister for Agriculture Production, Rural Development and Panchayati Raj, Javed Ahmad Dar, today convened a detailed review meeting regarding functioning of the department of Horticulture at Rajbagh,

During the meeting, the Minister assessed progress achieved under different programmes and schemes being undertaken by the department besides discussing challenges in smooth implementation of departmental initiatives.

The Minister emphasized upon the officials to prioritize public welfare initiatives and work in a mission mode to achieve set targets and goals. He acknowledged that the Horticulture sector has huge potential to address unemployment issues and can help in uplifting the rural life with better economic prospects.

"Horticulture sector has vast scope to bring transformative changes for providing ample employment opportunities to the rural people," said the Minister. He

**NC Legislature Sagar Assures** 

**Rehbar-i-Janglat Employees of** 

**Early Resolution of Their** 

**Demands** 



urged for utilization of modern Horticulture methods and high density farming. He instructed for handholding of farmers both awareness and technical guidance regarding latest and modern cultivation methods to the farmers.

"Technological interventions and modern day scientific applications have to be extended to provide all possible assistance

to boost the Horticulture industry and make this sector productive, vibrant and profitable," maintained the Minister. He directed the concerned to ensure benefits under different centrally sponsored and UT level schemes including Holistic Agriculture Development Program (HADP), reach to farming community for better production and progressive farming in the region.

The Minister was also apprised regarding the staff strengthening and issues related to infrastructure facilities.

Later, the Minister also released a booklet on Production of Designer Plants for Promotion of High Density Plantation and Rejuvenation of Orchards under HADP  $and \, Spray \, Schedule \, 2025 \, for \, management$ of Apple Orchards for the farming community of Kashmir division.

Earlier, Director Horticulture Kashmir, Zahoor Ahmad Bhat, presented an overview and performance of the department. Among others, the meeting was attended by Deputy Director, Assistant Director, Chief Horticulture Officers, Technical Officer and other concerned officials of the department. During the meeting, the Minister assessed progress achieved under different programmes and schemes being undertaken by the department besides discussing challenges in smooth implementation of departmental initiatives. The Minister emphasized upon the officials to prioritize public welfare initiatives and work in a mission mode to achieve set targets and goals.

# DC Srinagar finalizes arrangements

#### **HT News Network**

Srinagar, Feb 21,: National Conference General Secretary Ali Muhammad Sagar has assured Rehbari-Janglat employees that their long-pending demand for regularization will be addressed on priority, reaffirming the government's commitment to fulfilling its election promises.

During a meeting with representatives of the Rehbar-i-Janglat employees, Sagar acknowledged their grievances and stressed that their concerns were legitimate. He assured them that the party would take up the issue with the concerned authorities to expedite the regularization process.

The Rehbar-i-Janglat scheme, introduced in 2017, was aimed at engaging professionals in the Forest, Ecology, and Environment Department on a contractual basis. Under the scheme, hundreds of employees were appointed with the assurance of regularization after five years of service. However, despite fulfilling their tenure, many of these employees are still waiting for their services to be confirmed, leaving them in a state of uncertainty.

The employees have repeatedly staged protests, demanding that the government uphold its commitment and issue regularization orders without further delay. Many argue that they have been serving in tough forest terrains under challenging conditions and deserve job security and financial stability. [KNT]

# for Mahashivratri festival

Directs Officers to ensure all arrangements, adequate availability of traditional festive essentials

#### **■** HT News Network

SRINAGAR FEBRUARY 21: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Srinagar, Dr. Bilal Mohi-Ud-Din Bhat today chaired a meeting here at DC Office to review the arrangements for Mahashivratri festival scheduled to be celebrated on February 26.

Among others the meeting was attended by Additional District Development Commissioner, Additional Deputy Commissioner, Regional Transport Officer, Kashmir, SP Security, SDM East, Assistant Commissioner Revenue, Officers of Food Safety Organization, PHE R&B & SMC, FCS&CA and all Tehsildars of the Dis-

At the outset, the Deputy Commissioner was apprised by the officers of concerned line departments regarding



ebrations of the festival in stem, earthen pots, etc in the district.The DC passed the market.FCS&CA was directions to all departments for ensuring adequate availability of traditional festive essentials and uninterrupted power and water supplies.n the occasion, the DC instructed the Fisheries Department to establish sale outlets for trout fish at various prominent locations in the district ahead of the festival.Similarly, the DC

asked the concerned to

asked to provide advance ration to the Pandit families on the occasion.The Health Department was told to ensure availability of medical facilities and deployment of ambulances at important

The Power Department informed the meeting that it has devised a curtailmentfree schedule for identified areas where pandit community reside in the district.

DC also stressed on maintaining proper sanitation at prominent temples in the city including Durganag, Sharika Devi, Zeathyar, Ganpatyar, Wazir temples and at the entire pilgrimage route to Shankar Acharya temple.Ha further asked the officers to visit prominent temples within their jurisdiction to assess the arrangements for smooth celebrations of the festival.

DC directed for ensuring the best possible facilities at the Shankaracharya temple in particular where major congregations of devotees for special payers are held during the festival.

He directed concerned departments to ensure all basic arrangements are put in place for the devotees expected to perform Darshan in the Shankaracharya Temple during the festival.

#### Dir Colleges reviews functioning, construction work of GDC **Dangiwacha**

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#### HT News Network

@headlinestodaynews

Srinagar, February 21: Director Colleges, Dr. Sheikh Ajaz Bashir today visited Government Degree College, Dangiwacha to review the overall functioning of the college and to take stock of ongoing works including the construction of main college building, newly constructed pre-fabricated huts and approach road of the College.

He was accompanied by Asst. Director Planning, Higher Education Javid Ahmad Darvarious officials from other departments including R&B, Revenue, SICOP, Irrigation and Flood Control were also present on the spot.

On the occasion, Director instructed Principal of the College, Prof. Imtiyaz Ahmad Parray to start functioning of college and academic activities from the newly constructed pre-fabricated huts

He also interacted with the Civil Society of Dangiwacha and impressed them to support in the smooth functioning of the institution.

#### **Social Welfare Deptt Kashmir refutes** news regarding malfunctioning of **Marriage Assistance Scheme**

#### **HT News Network**

Srinagar, February 21: The Department of Social Welfare, Kashmir refutes news report published in a local Urdu daily Kashmir Uzma regarding dysfunction of Marriage Assistance SchemeAccording to the rebuttal issued by Director Social Welfare  $Department, Kashmir Mohammad\,Akbar\,Wani\,the$ Marriage Assistance is a financial assistance scheme for the girls of marriageable age who belong to either AAY or PHH Ration Card holder families and concerned District Social Welfare Officer submit the cases of eligible beneficiaries after due verification on fortnightly basis to concerned Deputy Commissioners. Applicants have to apply on Jansugam portal at least one month in advance i.e before the date of marriage. After due scrutinization and verification regarding her eligibility at DSWO level the case is forwarded to Deputy Commissioner, who thereafter refer the case to the Director Finance (Administrative Department) for payment.

#### 80 Headmasters Promoted, JK **Teachers Forum Thanks Government**

#### **HT News Network**

Srinagar, Feb 21: The government has taken a positive step by promoting more than 80 headmasters to the post of Zonal Education Officers (ZEOs) through the Look After ZDU. This move has been welcomed by teachers and students working in the education sector. The Jammu and Kashmir Teachers Forum (JKTF) had earlier raised the issue of pending promotions for headmasters, ZEOs, and principals. Following discussions with the government, a solution was reached, leading to the release of the promotion list. Provincial President of JKTF, Bhat Javeed, expressed gratitude to Chief Minister Omar Abdullah, Education Minister Sakina Itoo, and other officials for their efforts in resolving the matter. He acknowledged their role in addressing the concerns of teachers and non-teaching staff who faced difficulties due to the delay in promo-

### **DLSA Sgr, Wildlife Deptt organize** Save Environment prog at Hokersar

#### **HT News Network**

Srinagar, February 21: District Legal Services Authority (DLSA) Srinagar organized an awareness program in collaboration with Forest Magistrate, Court Srinagar and Department of Wild Life Wet Land, Division Kashmir, Srinagar at Hokarsar Lake under the theme 'Save Environment'.

The programme was held under the chairmanship of Jaffer Hussain Beg, Chairman DLSA Srinagar/ Principal District & Sessions Judge, Srinagar, and supervision of Secretary DLSA Srinagar Nusrat Ali Hakak and DFO, Altaf Ahmed Datoo.The program aimed to raise awareness about environmental conservation and the importance of protecting natural ecosys-

The awareness initiative was inaugurated by the Jaf-



of the District Legal Services Authority Srinagar, in the presence of Nusrat Ali Hakak, Secretary District Legal Services Authority Srinagar, Mohammad Ishtiyaq Alam Baba, Forest Magistrate, District Court Srinagar, SHO, Ranbeer Singh, Nasir Ahmed, Range Officer Lakes/CCR, Hokarsar Wetland Srinagar along with

staff members of the DLSA Srinagar, and officials of Hokarsar Wetland Srinagar also participated in the event.During the program, Ld. Judicial Officers emphasized the need for collective action to combat environmental issues, highlighting the role of legal services authorities in promoting environmental awareness.

The participants were

encouraged to adopt ecofriendly practices and support initiatives that contribute to a greener and healthier environment.

As part of the awareness program, pamphlets containing vital information about the NALSA helpline number and the availability of free legal aid were distributed on the spot. This initiative aimed to ensure that individuals, especially those from marginalized communities, are aware of their legal rights and can easily access free legal assistance when needed.

The event concluded with a pledge to continue efforts toward environmental preservation and further awareness campaigns. The District Legal Services Authority Srinagar remains committed to fostering environmental consciousness among the community through similar initiatives in the future.

### PIB Jammu Organizes Workshop to promote Raj Bhasha (Hindi) in Public Administration and Communication

#### **■** HT News Network

Jammu, Feb 21, 2025: Press

Information Bureau (PIB), Iammu under the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, organized a workshop aimed at promoting Raj Basha (Hindi) in various sectors of public administration and communication. The workshop focused on the importance of Hindi in promoting national integration and enhancing effective communication. The program was organised in collaboration with the Department of Official Languages, Jammu.

Director, Press Information Bureau Jammu, Neha Jalali in her address emphasized the essential role of Raj Basha in strengthening the interface between the government and citizens. She remarked that Raj Basha is not just a language but a symbol of India's cul-



tural unity. She said that as the official language of India, it is essential that we ensure its usage across all levels of administration and public services. She added that PIB, both at the national and regional level, plays an essential role in the effective use of Raj Bhasha to ensure that government communication reaches every citizen in the desired language. Highlighting the critical need for promoting Hindi, the Director stressed that its adoption across digital platforms will sufficiently help in the growth of the language and lead to the greater participation of the general public. In his address, Assistant

Director, Department of Official Languages, Sh. Santosh Kumar said that the promotion of Raj Bhasha is not only about preserving our cultural heritage but also about making government services accessible to all, regardless of regional or linguistic differences. He also familiarized the participants with various provisions of the Official Languages Act, 1963. He urged the participants to issue general administrative orders, circulars, other reports and leave applications in Hindi on a regular basis.

He also encouraged them to learn typing through Unicode in view of the implementation of e-office in PIB's regional and branch offices. Sh Kumar suggested that the participants enroll themselves in training programmes with the Department to gain proficiency in Hindi.

The workshop covered various aspects, including the role of Raj Basha in official communications, the promotion of Hindi in digital and media platforms and the importance of language training for government employees. Discussions also focused on the need for language sensitivity and the implementation of bilingual communication strategies. The Government of India has launched various initiatives to promote Hindi, including the development of Kanthasth 2.0, which is a memory-based translation software.

**CMYK** 

### **EDITORIAL**

# **Solve miseries of** carpet weavers & provide a decent life to them

Rew days back in a significant development the Indian Institute of Carpet Technology (IICT) handed over steel power looms to 100 carpet weavers of Kashmir valley. These carpet weavers were selected among the draw of lots and the distribution of steel power looms has come as a huge relief for the people associated with preparation of carpets. One can expect that the carpet weavers would feel relieved after using the steel power looms.

The biggest relief would be in the form of health and there would be less stress on the eyes of carpet weavers. Over the years it has been observed that the carpet weavers would burn midnight oil in order to make a carpet. In such a scenario the health of a carpet weaver is the biggest casualty and the carpet weavers pay a heavy price in making a carpet. Since technology has progressed by leaps and bounds it is important that innovations are introduced in the sector of carpet making.

The carpet weavers are entitled to a better life and as such the government needs to walk an extra mile in this regard. Despite all the advancements many of the carpet weavers are exploited by the exporters and middlemen. Even though a hand knotted carpet fetches a handsome amount for the exporter the carpet weavers are paid peanuts. It is due to this reason that a carpet weaver lives hand to mouth and never dreams to live a life where all his basic needs are fulfilled.

The introduction of steel power looms is expected to revolutionize the carpet making and it will take less time in making a carpet. The carpet weavers would have to work less in making a carpet and as such they would be able to make more carpets on an average in a month. Once the carpet weavers make more carpets it is bound to increase their monthly income and they would be able to earn more bucks.

It is imperative that the Department of Handicrafts takes the exploiters to task and at the same time it is ensured that respectable wages are paid to the carpet makers. These people need all the support from the different stakeholders and the government is an important stakeholder in this regard. It is the responsibility of the concerned department to take all the rehabilitation measures for the carpet makers so that these people along with their family members are not pushed to the hilt.

### **Clearing Miscommunications Between Sufism And Salafism**

ER NASEER AHMAD BHAT

'n recent years, there has been a significant amount of discourse on social media and among scholars regarding the relationship between Sufism and Salafism. While both groups fall within the broad spectrum of Islam, each has its own approach to the practice of faith, understanding of Islamic traditions, and the pursuit of spirituality. One of the most persistent misconceptions that has emerged in this discourse is the belief that Sufism, as practised by many, represents a form of polytheism, or shirk. This misconception has been exacerbated by certain extreme or unorthodox practices that some individuals claim to be Sufi in nature. However, this article seeks to clarify that true Sufism is deeply rooted in the teachings of Islam, profoundly monotheistic, and stands far apart from the distorted practices often depicted in social media and some fringe groups.

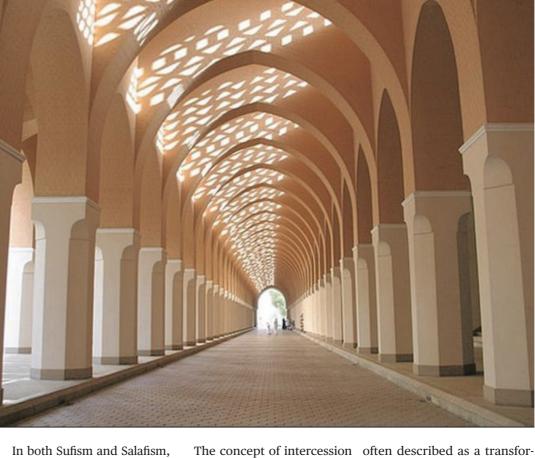
To begin with, it is essential to define the core principles of both Sufism and Salafism and to address the reasons behind the tension between them. Sufism, in its essence, is not a sect or an innovation but rather a spiritual path within Islam aimed at the purification of the soul and achieving closeness to Allah (God). Sufis strive to embody the qualities of sincerity, humility, patience, and love for Allah. On the other hand, Salafism is a term used to describe a return to the practices of the earliest generations of Muslims, specifically the companions of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and the two generations that followed them. Salafis emphasize a strict, literal interpretation of the Qur'an and Hadith, adhering to the foundational texts without innovation or deviation.

#### The Misconception: Sufis Are

One of the most serious misconceptions that has been widely propagated is the claim that Sufism inherently encourages polytheism (shirk) and that Sufis are not true monotheists. This claim arises from the belief that some Sufi practices, such monotheism (Tawhid). What Is Tawhid?

absolute oneness of Allah, is the core principle of the Islamic faith. Every Muslim, whether Sufi or Salafi, affirms this belief. Allah says in the Qur'an: "Say, begets nor is born, nor is there

to Him any equivalent." (Qur'an



the belief in Tawhid is non-negooften lies in how this belief is practically applied and undermediaries in the spiritual world. The Essence of True Sufism

At its core, Sufism is a means to achieve closeness to Allah. The Sufi journey is one of spiritual purification and seeking Allah's pleasure through acts of worship, remembrance (dhikr), and contemplation. A true Sufi does not believe in the divinity of anyone other than Allah, has the power to intercede with Allah except through His will. This is the first point of distinction that needs to be made clear: polytheism or the worship of anyone other than Allah.

the graves of righteous individuals (Awliya), but these acts are a means of showing respect for not as a deity themselves. The are assured." (Qur'an 13:28) Qur'an makes clear that seeking not compromise the belief in Tawhid.

Allah says in the Qur'an: "And and seek forgiveness for their sins - and who can forgive sins except Allah?" (Qur'an 3:135)

is explicitly discussed in both tiable and absolute. However, the Qur'an and Hadith, and the difference between the two the intercession of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) is a well-established belief stood, particularly regarding the among all Muslims. Therefore, veneration of saints or the inter- when Sufis seek intercession through the righteous, they do so with the understanding that the power of intercession is ultimately in the hands of Allah.

#### The Real Sufi Path: Love, **Devotion, and Monotheism**

Sufism has a long history of producing some of Islam's greatest scholars and thinkers, such as Imam Al-Ghazali, Ibn Arabi, Rumi, and many others, who nor do they believe that anyone have consistently emphasized the monotheistic foundation of their beliefs. These great figures have taught that the ultimate goal of the Sufi path is to achieve True Sufism does not advocate a deeper love and understanding of Allah, purifying one's heart from worldly distractions, There are certain practices and embodying the attributes within Sufism, such as visiting of Allah in one's behaviour and

not meant to imply worship of reflection, self-purification, the deceased. Instead, they are and remembrance of Allah (dhikr), which are central pracas seeking the intercession of the piety and virtues of the rightices in Sufism: "Those who have saints or venerating the graves teous, seeking inspiration from believed and whose hearts are is not concerned with the worof Sufi masters, involve invoking their life and actions, and asking assured by the remembrance of ship of anything other than ism share the ultimate goal of other than Allah, which contra- Allah to accept the intercession Allah. Unquestionably, by the Allah. Practices such as seeking achieving closeness to Allah, dicts the central tenet of Islamic of these individuals by His will, remembrance of Allah hearts

Moreover, the Hadiths also Tawhid, the concept of the intercession from Allah's will is emphasize the importance permissible, as long as it does of loving Allah and striving to be close to Him. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said: "Allah said: 'I am as those who, when they commit My servant thinks I am. If he 'He is Allah, [Who is] One, Allah, an immorality or wrong them thinks well of Me, then he will the Eternal Refuge. He neither selves [by sin], remember Allah find that; and if he thinks ill of Me, then he will find that." (Sahih Muslim)

mative force that transcends the ordinary bounds of worship, guiding individuals toward deeper spiritual awareness and closeness to the Creator. This love is not contrary to Tawhid; rather, it reinforces it. Sufis express their devotion to Allah not through physical acts of worship alone, but through their internal state of submission, humility, and surrender to the

#### **Dispelling Misconceptions Highlighted on Social Media**

It is undeniable that social media has played a role in the spread of misconceptions and misrepresentations of both Sufism and Salafism. Distorted practices, such as excessive veneration of saints, ritualistic behaviour, or exaggerated claims of spiritual powers, have been showcased on various platforms, leading many to wrongly associate these behaviours with Sufism as a whole. However, it is important to

The Qur'an itself encourages distinguish between these aberrant practices and true Sufism. True Sufism, as outlined by the great Islamic scholars, is rooted in the Qur'an and Hadith and from the true Sufi tradition. blessings from a saint's tomb and we must come together or asking for their intercession to foster understanding and should not be conflated with respect. I extend an open invithe belief that these figures have tation to Salafis to explore the independent powers apart from true essence of Sufism, a path of Allah. The Sufi path is meant profound spirituality, love, and to guide individuals toward a devotion, rooted deeply in the deeper, more profound connection with Allah, not to encourage

Sufism is to engage with its classical texts, the works of schol- in service to Allah alone. In Sufism, love for Allah is ars, and the genuine practices

of spiritual masters who have adhered to the principles of Islam in their most profound form. The actions of individuals or groups who deviate from these principles should not define an entire spiritual tradi-

#### A Call for Unity and Mutual **Understanding**

It is time for both Salafis and Sufis to come together in the pursuit of the shared goal of worshipping Allah and living according to the authentic teachings of Islam. While there are differences in approach, both groups are fundamentally united in their love for the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and their belief in the oneness of Allah. By fostering mutual understanding and respect, it is possible to bridge the gap between Sufism and Salafism.

To the Salafis, I invite you to recognize that true Sufism is not about polytheism, nor is it a deviation from the fundamental principles of Islam. The true Sufi path is one of deeper devotion, humility, and a refined understanding of the oneness of Allah. Sufism offers a way to purify the heart, cultivate spiritual awareness, and strengthen one's relationship with Allah.

By emphasizing commonalities, engaging in respectful dialogue, and focusing on the core principles of Tawhid and the Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), both Sufis and Salafis can unite under the banner of true Islam, rejecting miscommunications and misunderstandings. The ultimate goal is not to perpetuate divisions but to strive together for the pleasure of Allah, who is the Most Merciful and the Most Forgiving.

In conclusion, the misconception that Sufism is inherently polytheistic is a distortion of the true teachings of Islam. Sufism, at its heart, is a path of intense devotion, love, and remembrance of Allah, and it stands in harmony with the monotheistic foundation of Islam. While social media and certain individuals have exaggerated or misrepresented some practices as being part of Sufism, it is critical to separate these fringe elements

Both Sufism and Salafteachings of the Qur'an and the Sunnah of the Prophet Muhamany form of shirk or polytheism. mad (peace be upon him). The key to understanding Together, let us walk the path of truth, unity, and monotheism,

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### Should the parole pleas of heinous criminals not be heard?



DR. SATYAWAN SAURABH

arole is based on reform and reinteis used for serious crimes, are literally overcrowded it creates ethical and legal dilemmas. The principles parole allows incarcerated of human rights and rehapeople to serve the remaintheir repeated crimes, the bilitation must be taken into der of their sentence with account, even though justice their loved ones while law demands punishment and prevention. An important a close eye on them. This cal influence can erode step in the criminal justice saves millions in taxes every faith in justice, resulting in key component of the Nelson demonstrated. According to make the necessary changes system is parole. It is a form day and is a great system of relief to help prisoners for the entire society. Very reintegrate into society. It is rarely do you hear of a vio- the T. P. Chandrasekharan Rules for the Treatment of deny someone parole. Coun- should include creating nothing more than a tool for lent offender who is released murder case was reportedly Prisoners, is reform. Parole tries such as Norway have strong guidelines to implethe prisoner's social recov- on parole and then commits ery. However, in recent another violent crime. years, there has been a signif-

requests for parole are ignored, lack the resources benefits on flimsy grounds because they are poor and gration, but when it powerless. Since our prisons with non-violent offenders,

icant shift in this idea as the serve at least 85% of their in these crimes, reform ments. Rather than being sizing gradual reintegration. ity of life of prisoners, crespending time in prison. On can weaken the sense of justhe other hand, millions tice of victims and their fam- devoid of mercy is needed. Rehabilitation of prisoners of other prisoners, whose ilies. There must be strong According to Indian courts, serving life sentences resultdeterrence against heinous people released on parole ed in a reduction in recidicrimes such as terrorism, are allowed to exercise their vism in Maharashtra in 2023. to take advantage of the pro- rape, and murder. To main- rights to procreation and Parole requests are already in the 2012 Nirbhaya case were not granted parole. Premature release of prisoners can pose a threat to society, especially if they commit crimes repeatedly. Due to convicts in the 2013 Shakti Mills gang rape case were enforcement agencies keep not granted parole. Politithe granting of parole that Mandela Rules (2015), the Sriharan (2015), it is unconis not warranted. Parole in UN Standard Minimum stitutional to completely tice system. These changes granted due to political presis a right, not a privilege, reduced recidivism rates, ment the supervised release sure. Because of the brutali- as Justice Krishna Iyer has even for those convicted of system in a progressive Most violent criminals ty and pre-planning involved emphasized in several judg- heinous crimes, by empha- manner to improve the qual-

the Constitution. However, since the right to marriage is and justice. In State of Harynot recognized by law, grant- ana v. Jai Singh (2003), the ing parole on this basis com- Supreme Court affirmed that promises the right to equality for gay prisoners.

To guarantee equality and ers, courts can link parole to the more general right to ment without the possibil-

thereby guaranteeing safety parole should be granted according to impartial stanviolated by life imprison-

rich and powerful class has sentence in any case. But is challenging. The 2018 a general sanction, parole Norway has one of the lowest ating consistent parole laws started using parole to avoid there is no doubt that parole Kathua rape case made it should be granted based recidivism rates in the world to prove that it is an effecclear that harsh punishment on behavioral assessment. thanks to its model of rehabilitative justice.

As is commonly known, paroled as a direct result. actions taken should be reviewed by the courts. It is to reform our criminal jus-

tive tool for rehabilitation, and establishing checks and balances to prevent abuse the effectiveness of parole of parole in India. The govadministration has been ernment should be conhampered by strong cerned about overcrowding cess or are wrongly denied tain deterrence, the convicts marriage under Article 21 of assessed by courts on merit, administrative and politi- in prisons, and they should cal pressure. The goals of address this immediately. the program are routinely Justice, deterrence, and compromised, and many rehabilitation should all be inappropriate offenders are considered when limiting parole to heinous crimes. With regard to parole, a Public safety and moral fairdards. Article 21 (the right well-defined judicial policy ness can be guaranteed withinclusiveness for all prison- to life with dignity) can be is essential, and executive out extensive restrictions by using a transparent, meritbased approach with strict intimacy under Article 21. A ity of parole if reform is time for our lawmakers to judicial oversight. Parole is something that cannot be ignored, as is obvious.

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

### **Are 14 Years Enough** For Aijaz Sheikh's **Heinous Crimes?**

15TH OF LADLINES

**NOWSHEENA MUSHTAQ** 

Kashmir has provoked masignored? How many chilsive outrage and disbelief. dren cried out for help and Sheikh has been sentenced were silenced? This is not to just 14 years of impris- a failure in the courts. It is onment for the appalling a total failure of the system crimes inflicted by this man that allowed him to continue over the last three and a unchecked for so long. half decades on innocent children, using the trusted more than a prison term, for roles of a teacher, an imam, it has to bring closure to vicand a faith healer. In all tims and security to society. honesty, this man should A punishment of 14 years is receive much more punish- far from it. The survivors will ment from the justice system spend their entire lives runfor deeds of such magnitude, ning from the torture of his an estimated 5,000 victims abuses but that, according to subjected to sexual vio- this verdict, could be a free lence against minors, forced man in a little over a decade. enactment of these crimes The agony these crimes have by minors, and even filming inflicted will not expire after these egregious acts.

position to gain access to should be? Is this how little a innumerable innocent vic- child's life is worth? tims through three decades of considered even remotely decades. close to justice?

Children from Sexual Offens- literally, every child harmed. es (POCSO) Act has a provicategory of extreme, then nor will they ever be let out."

what are extreme cases? Beyond the legal front, the case stands as a grim reminder of how society ordinarily functions in protecting its most vulnerable.

man operated quite freely, protected by the trust and The sentencing of Aijaz respect that came with his Sheikh, the most infa-so-called noble professions. mous child rapist in How many suspicions were

Justice is supposed to be the term of 14 years, so is Sheikh manipulated his this the way that punishment

This case ought to open brutality perpetrated against the minds of the courts of them. The children who justice on the relevance of looked upon him for healing the offence. A really deterand guidance were done the mined prosecution must worst forms of evil by him. ensure that Sheikh never He not only committed these walks the streets again, heinous acts but also com- with an appeal for tougher pelled children to abuse one sentences. Society as well another while he watched should demand stricter laws and sometimes even filmed and create stronger walls the abuse. Such trauma is a preventing predators from scar that remains on a person hiding in trusted positions. for life. And what he has col- Schools, religious institulected for his payout in terms tions, and families should be of punishment does little to eyes wide open and report cement the wounds he has abuse cases more readily. created. Therefore, one must Child safety should never ask is14 years of imprison- be claimed as a given. Covment for being a monster ering it shouldn't be given

What Aijaz Sheikh has The legal system defines done is beyond the pale of the edicts of justice. It pro-forgiveness, beyond redemptects the helpless and has tion, and certainly beyond a a suffocated future crimi- mere 14-year sentence. He nal. However, this ruling has built a life of inflicting does give a morbid sugges- trauma on innocent young tion even the worst offend- children and stripping them ers those with systematic of their sense of trust, digdestruction of thousands nity, and safety. The fight of lives, may one day walk for justice does not end with free. In many countries, this verdict. If we truly hold serial child rapists either value in the lives of children, face life imprisonment with- life in prison without parole out parole or, in some cases, must be the least penalty for even capital punishment. such a monstrous predator. India's own Protection of Anything less is a betrayal of,

Let this be the moment sion for life imprisonment where society says unequivor even the death penalty ocally to the world, "Child in extreme cases. If Sheikh's predators will not find the crimes do not fall into the mercy of this society again,

> The writer, an MA in **English from the Central** University of Kashmir, is an educator at Birla Open **Minds International School Pampore**

For over three decades, this nowsheen9051@gmail.com

## PM SHRI School: Beyond Brick and Mortar; A new dawn and phantasm for the Future of our village



NAWAZZ IBN AHAD

sanctioning of a PM SHRI educational institution. tional infrastructure. This ties has kept us behind in tion. We must advocate (Prime Minister Schools It is a catalyst for social has compelled our stu-many aspects of develop- for qualified teachers, for our village, however, and economic upliftment. brings a much-needed ray Educated individuals lead of hope. This landmark to empowered families, development is not just a school; it is a beacon gressive communities. of transformation, an With the right infrastrucopportunity to bridge the ture and resources, we s the adage goes, long-standing educational "Education is the gap that has hindered our into a center of academic passport to the community's growth. The excellence rather than a future, for tomorrow PM SHRI initiative is not forgotten dot on the map. belongs to those who pre- just about constructing pare for it today." With another school building; al DevelopmentThe PM the PM SHRI school, our it is about creating model village is now poised to institutions equipped claim its rightful place in with 21st-century learning the sun, armed with the tools, smart classrooms, power of knowledge and and an inclusive environthe promise of a better ment that fosters innovatomorrow.Education is tion and leadership. With the cornerstone of prog- an emphasis on experien- areas. This centrally-sponress, yet our village has tial learning, skill developlong struggled with inadment, and environmental equate educational infra- consciousness, This is not structure. With only one just the dawn of a new middle school available, era in education; it is the of students. The school our children have been dawn of a new era for our compelled to travel to villages. This will serve as a adjacent villages in pur- powerful tool for change, suit of knowledge. The capable of unlocking doors advent of the PM SHRI to a better future. For our school heralds a pletho- children, this school is a ra of advantages for the gateway to endless posstudents and the com-sibilities. For our villages, munity at large. The PM this is a source of dignity SHRI school emerges as and progress. this school a timely intervention, has the potential to nurpromising to bridge this ture future-ready students gap and provide a robust who can contribute meanfoundation for the intelingfully to society. For our

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of our children. The recent sents more than just an lagged behind in educa- proper educational facili- effective implementawhich in turn build procan transform our village A Milestone in Education-SHRI School is not just another educational institution- but more than a mere edifice, it is a transformative initiative aimed at uplifting education in rural and underserved sored scheme focuses on modern teaching methods, smart classrooms, and holistic development will provide quality education with well-equipped classrooms, trained teachers, and digital learning tools, ensuring that our village's role as an edu- and our community. you can use to change children receive the education they deserve within their own village. For prospects, skill development, its success depends is now one step closer to years, our village has been ment, and social progress on collective responsibil- wielding that weapon and at a disadvantage due to the lack of a proper school beyond the middle level. most powerful tool for ing the institution; now, it and work towards making Despite being a central change, and our commu- is up to us-the villagers, quality education acceshub for nearly ten sur- nity is in dire need of this the parents, and the local sible to every child in our

education closer to home. of learning for students lectual and social growth village, this school repre-rounding villages, we have change. The absence of authorities—to ensure its village.

dents to undertake long ment. But now, with the proper infrastructure, and difficult journeys to PM SHRI School, we have and a well-structured curother villages for school- a golden opportunity to riculum. We must work ing-an inconvenience that empower our children, towards fostering an envihas often led to dropouts, strengthen our society, ronment where education lower literacy rates, and and pave the way for a is valued not just in prinlimited career opportuni- brighter future. While this ciple but in practice. As we ties. But with the estab- is a significant achieve- embrace this new chapter, lishment of the PM SHRI ment, it is just the begin- let us not forget the long School, this struggle is set ning. To ensure the success struggle that brought us to change.Impact on Local of this initiative, we must here. The sanctioning of Students and the Commuactively support the estab-the PM SHRI school is an nityThe PM SHRI School lishment and functioning opportunity to rewrite will significantly reduce of the school, encourage the narrative of our vilthe burden on students students to enroll, and lage. It is time to move and parents by bringing work collectively to make from lamenting our eduthis institution a model of cational shortcomings to No longer will our chil- excellence. The PM SHRI celebrating our potential. dren have to travel long School is more than just distances for basic school- a school-it is a symbol ing. It will not only ensure of hope, progress, and finally, it is coming home. access to quality educa- a better future. It rep- Let us pledge to nurture tion but also promote resents a new chapter this institution with the gender equality, as many in the history of our vil-dedication and vision it families hesitate to send lage, one where educatheir daughters to distant tion becomes the driving erations to come may schools. Additionally, this force for change. Let us not just dream of a better school will act as a center embrace this opportunity future but be equipped to with open arms and work build it. As the saying goes, from neighboring villages, towards building a brightfurther strengthening our er future for our children powerful weapon which cational hub. It will open While the PM SHRI school the world." With the PM doors to better career is a monumental achieve- SHRI school, our village for our youth. It is often ity. The government has transforming its destinyLsaid that education is the done its part by sanctionet us embrace this change

Education is not merely a privilege-it is a right, and deserves so that the gen-"Education is the most

### Budget powers India's green transition with clean tech push

N VAMSI REDDY

budget is tai- not wait. lored to drive consumpin India's energy landincrease.

on coal-fired power with one stroke, transforma-**▼**hile FM Nirmala tive reforms in the power Sitharaman's sector couldn't and must

The path to carbon neution, propel long-term trality has to be paved with growth, and reinforce renewables. The Budget India's commitment to a has provided the muchgreener world, proposals needed push to nuclear to power India's journey energy with the target of energy sector reforms, long-term energy transi- modular reactors. policies, and incentives tion strategy and achievstand out as they provide ing long-term economic

scape. India's demand for to position nuclear energy ment targets developing distribution companies' renewable energy sector. reduce India's imports by power will continue to as a significant pillar of the at least five indigenously The country has set an with India's broader objec- SMRs by 2033. The gov- reforms initiated under initiative and the new ambitious target of achieve tives of a Viksit Bharat ernment will also bring in the revamped distribuction clean tech manufacturing for solar power to promote ing net zero by 2070, a that will be less reliant on necessary amendments to tion system scheme, states tall order. The power fossil fuels. The proposal the Atomic Energy Act and can borrow an additional sector accounts for nearly to launch a Nuclear Energy Civil Liability for Nuclear 0.5 per cent of their gross cells, batteries, and other manufacturers and will one-third of India's total Mission will promote Damage Act to facilitate domestic product over sustainable technologies boost RE capacity. greenhouse gas emissions. domestic capabilities, pri- the Mission and encour- and above what they get While a country like India vate sector participation, age private sector particiunder the FRBM Act.



towards sustainability and achieving 100 GW capacity ment of advanced nuclear projects. This is a great cells, electrolysers, wind net zero through various by 2047 as part of India's technologies such as small initiative! The Budget pro-turbines, high-voltage solar panels by half to 20

energy mix. This aligns designed and operational can't eliminate its reliance and enhanced deploy- pation in nuclear power

With an outlay of Rs tricity reforms and aug- and grid-scale batteries, vided animal spirits to the 20,000 crore for promot-mentation of inter-state among other technologies. wind energy sector, which for a transformative shift and environmental goals. ing research and develop- transmission capacity by The Budget marks a trans- would further reduce the The government wants ment of SMRs, the govern-states will advance power formative step for India's price of the panels and financial health and capac- The government's commit- facilitating domestic proity. Upon meeting the ment to the 'Make in India'

reform measures are part able economic growth. of the government's plans The full BCD exemption to support clean tech- of the scrap of lithium-ion nology. The government batteries, Lead, Zinc, and also intends to promote 12 more critical minerals clean tech manufactur- will help boost battery ing to improve domestic manufacturing in India value addition and build and promote more jobs a local ecosystem for solar for our youth. posal to incentivise elec- transmission equipment, per cent, the FM has propolicy will augment the rooftop solar projects is development of solar PV locally in India.

These moves will con-This will significantly tribute to the nation's

improve the efficiency of clean energy journey the power sector. These while fostering sustain-

By reducing the BCD on duction.

The increased allocation positive for solar module

> (The writer is Director, Shirdi Sai Electricals Ltd; views are personal)

## A perilous challenge for India's soft diplomacy

SANTHOSH MATHEW

circumstances, accused of vulnerable. killing a Yemeni citizen. of its own.

situation, which has esca-values upheld by India. lated into an international for years, with the Houthi been commendable, with allowed to govern the fate plex international conflicts. The Indian government's ners, underscore the counhuman rights and justice rebels now in control of swift actions to ensure that of an innocent individual.

situation lies in the poten- face the harshest of out- of India's intervention and rity environment. tial consequences. Nimi- comes, including arbitrary highlights the potential for for India to step forward blood money-a custom resorting to traditional decisively to protect one rooted in Yemeni culture— tribal customs like blood may become a mode of money. The environment in resolution. This practice,

n the volatile heart of and the justice system frac- Foreign Minister, Abbas guard her but also reaffirm it is through these alliances citizens abroad.

India's foreign policy Houthi-controlled Sanaa deeply embedded in parts has long been defined by often treated with disdain, is precarious, with little of the country, contradicts its commitment to human and Nimisha could fall hope of a fair trial or a the ideals of modern jus-rights and justice. In this victim to a miscarriage of peaceful resolution. This tice and the humanitarian case, the Indian govern- justice. To prevent this, to operate through both government's ability to justice are upheld, India that Nimisha Priya's case is ment must continue to India must leverage all dip-The Indian government stand firm on these prin-lomatic channels, including diplomatic challenge, has already taken signifi- ciples, ensuring that Nimi- informal backdoor negotia- unique advantage in resolv- ment's proactive measures, affairs. Through such stra- signalling a victory for demands India's immedicant steps to address the sha's life is not negotiated tions and Track Two diploing this crisis and ensuring diplomatic outies, and indian diplomacy on the ate intervention. Yemen crisis. India's diplomatic for a price. Blood money, macy, which have proven ing that Nimisha receives reach and coordination also affirm its position as has been mired in conflict response to this case has in particular, must not be effective in navigating com- a fair and just resolution. with international part- a nation that champions

The Houthi-controlled sha's case is not just about punishment or worse, in multilateral diplomacy to justice system may not the allegation; it is a call an environment where resolve the issue without provide the due process or is a critical tool in this in a modern, civilized soci-

Foreign nationals are

Yemen's capital, Sanaa, tured, foreign nationals, Araghchi, raised the issue India's role as a leading that India can garner supan Indian national, especially from countries with the Houthi envoy, advocate for justice and port for its position. Coun-Nimisha Priya, faces dire like India, are particularly showing a growing recog- human dignity in the global tries like Iran, which shares India's soft power diplo- citizens abroad-becomes is also an opportunity for nition of the case's imporarena. More crucially, Nimistrong historical ties with It is feared that Nimisha tance on the regional diplo- sha Priya's situation places India, have shown will-The charges are serious, Priya, if left without diplomatic stage. This cooperaher life at risk due to the ingness to mediate in this ing healthcare across the isolated incident; it reprematic maturity. but the true gravity of the matic intervention, could tion reflects the urgency volatile political and secu- case, as evidenced by Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi's intervention. Track Two diplomacy ambassadors of India.

results when official chan- It reflects India's broader regional powers, leverag- and human dignity. leader formal and informal dip- protect them. lomatic avenues offers it a

the capital. With power the matter does not esca- India's insistence on this of maintaining close ties are a testament to its com- global player. dynamics in constant flux late further. Notably, Iran's point will not only safe- with the Middle East, and mitment to protecting its

through trusted interme- abroad, is thus more than should be lauded. diaries can often achieve just a personal concern. nels are bogged down by commitment to safeguard-

As India's diplomatic out- the world. reach continues to devel-This case also high- op, the importance of soft Priya's situation presents lights the importance of power-exemplified by its a serious challenge, but it macy. Indian nurses, who increasingly evident. Nimi- India to reaffirm its values play a vital role in provid- sha's case is not merely an and demonstrate its diplo-Middle East, are viewed sents an opportunity for not only as healthcare pro- India to assert its influence prehensive action, India viders but also as cultural and diplomatic capability will not only save her life on the global stage. The but also reinforce its rep-The protection of Nimi-government's efforts to utation as a responsible fairness one would expect regard. Informal dialogue sha Priya, a nurse working safeguard Nimisha Priya

ing backchannel diplo- in human rights and jus-The Indian govern- ing leadership in global and respect she deserves, India has a long history actions to address this case try's growing stature as a for all its citizens, regard-

less of where they are in

In conclusion, Nimisha

By taking swift and comglobal leader, protecting its citizens and upholding By engaging with the ideals of peace, justice, bureaucracy and political ing its citizens and main- macy, and ensuring that tice. India must continue sensitivities. India's ability taining their trust in the international standards of to press forward, ensuring demonstrates its grow-resolved with the fairness world stage.

(The writer is an associate professor; views are personal)

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# Kathua administration hosts Mega Job Fair 1156 aspirants get placement letters

KATHUA, FEBRUARY 21: The Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir witnessed one of its mega Job Fairs today at the Sports Stadium Kathua, offering a wide-range of employment opportunities to thousands of job seekers.

Organized with the aim of bridging the gap between job aspirants and industries, the event attracted an overwhelming response, bringing together leading businesses and a diverse pool of talent.

With a record-breaking

offering of over 1000 job vacancies, the Job Fair provided employment opportunities across multiple sectors. Esteemed organizations such as Godrej, Pidilite, Varun Beverages, Atomic North, Rexa, LIC, and many others actively participated, seeking to hire skilled, semi-skilled, and fresh candidates.

The roles available spanned industries such as manufacturing, sales, marketing, finance, and technical services, catering to a wide range of professional interests and skill sets.

drive was made possible



This mega employment through the dedicated efforts Kathua in collaboration with tion. of the District Administration the Local Industrial Associa-

Deputy Commissioner Dr.

Rakesh Minhas personally oversaw the proceedings, ensuring a seamless and efficient execution of the day-long

The event was graced by presence of MLA Kathua; MLA Hiranagar and MLA Basoli who

interacted with job seekers. Job aspirants from every corner of the district flocked to the venue, eager to explore potential career opportunities. To maximize participation and outreach, the District Administration launched an extensive awareness campaign through advertisements, social media promotions, and direct appeals

by elected representatives and former PRI members. The proactive approach contributed significantly to the fair's resounding success. To maximize participation and outreach, the District Administration launched an extensive awareness campaign through advertisements, social media promotions, and direct appeals by elected representatives and former PRI members. The proactive approach contributed significantly to the fair's resounding success which resulted in placement of 1156 job aspirants in varied roles.

### **Doda Admin discuss arrangements for Holy Month of Ramzan**

#### **■ HT News Network**

DODA, FEBRUARY 21: Deputy Commissioner(DC)HarvinderSinghtoday chaired a meeting to discuss the arrangements for the holy month of

The meeting was attended by SSP Sandeep Kumar Mehta; ADC Sudarshan Kumar; ACR Sunil Kumar Bhutyal and officers of line departments, besides President of the Seerat Committee, President of the Beopar Association. President of the Butcher Association and other concerned officers joining via virtual mode.

The review covered key aspects including supply of drinking water, uninterrupted power, security, traffic management, stray animal issues, cleanliness, availability of essential commodities, regulation of rates and market checking.

A detailed discussion ensued on the measures being taken by the concerned departments for adequate supply of potable water and Power supply. The concerned functionaries were asked to meet the gaps, if any, to ensure uninterrupted power supply, particularly during Sehri and Iftar

**HT News Network** 

DODA, FEBRUARY 21: Deputy Com-

missioner Doda, Harvinder Singh on

Friday chaired a comprehensive

review meeting here in the main

Conference Hall to assess the progress

of the development projects across

the district's blocks and panchavats.

The meeting was attended by District

Officers, Block Development Officers

(BDOs), and Junior Assistant Executive

for the following work:-

Rani Bagh Park

Anantnag

Name



The police department was asked to strengthen security arrangements to maintain law and order, while ARTO was instructed to ensure smooth traffic management. Special instructions were issued to Municipal Committees of Doda, Bhaderwah, and Thathri to maintain cleanliness and hygiene, especially around mosques and marketplaces. The CA&FCS department was asked to ensure the availability of essential commodities at governmentapproved rates.

The DC emphasized the impor-

DC reviews progress of development

projects, sanitation initiatives in Doda

Engineers (JAEEs). Reviewing key

initiatives such as the construction

of Community Compost Pits, Com-

munity Soakage Pits, Community

Sanitary Complexes, and Individual

Household Latrines, he asked for

quality work and timeline completion

of each project. The status of the

district's plastic waste management

system and Open Space Reservations

(OSR) was also discussed in detail.

Further, the meeting evaluated the

progress of ongoing works under

Government of Jammu & Kashmir

DIRECTORATE OF FLORICULTURE (G&P) KASHMIR

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

GIST of e- Tender Notice No.08 of 2025

Dated: - 21/02/2025

system) from the interested bidders/Registered Contractors/Firms with J&K State/Central Govt., CPWD

**Earnest Money** 

For and on behalf of the Lt. Governor, Union Territory, J&K, bids are invited (In double cover

tance of inter-departmental coordination to avoid inconvenience to the public. He urged all stakeholders to adopt a proactive approach to meet the public requirements during the holy month.

The SSP assured that adequate security measures would be implemented, with increased patrolling, surveillance, and regulation of traffic to avoid congestion near religious places and marketplaces.

The representatives of the trade and religious organisations gave suggestions regarding different issues of public importance.

Panchayati Raj Institution (PRI)

Grants and other schemes. Officials

were directed to address challenges

promptly and enhance coordination

to improve public amenities. Review-

ing key initiatives such as the con-

struction of Community Compost

Pits, Community Soakage Pits, Com-

munity Sanitary Complexes, and

Individual Household Latrines, he

asked for quality work and timeline

completion of each project. The sta-

Validity of

contract

tus of the district's plastic waste.

### **District Administration Kishtwar hosts** orientation workshop on Disaster Preparedness

#### **■** HT News Network

KISHTWAR, FEBRUARY 21: The District Administration of Kishtwar organized a specialized interactive session on Advanced Preparedness for Natural, Contemporary, and Anthropogenic Disasters here in the Conference Hall, New DC Office Complex.

line with the directions issued by the Divisional Commissioner Jammu, was attended by district heads and officials from stakeholder departments.

The session, aimed at strengthening disaster resilience and response mechanisms. The resource person was Prof. (Dr.) Ravi Ivee, Vice President (In Proto Vice Chancellor of the The event, organised in International University

### **Name Change**

I, Saika Yaseen Bhat, daughter of Mohammad Yaseen Bhat, resident of Kanthparistan, Safakadal, Sgr, hereby declare that I have changed my Old name Saika Yaseen Bhat to New Name Saika Yaseen. In the future, I will be known as Saika Yaseen by this name for all official and personal purposes. If anybody have any objection in this regard He/She may file his/her objection in the concerned office within seven days from the date of publication of this notice after that no objection will be entertained.

> Name. ..Saika Yaseen S/O Mohammad Yaseen Bhat R/O Kanthparistan, Safakadal

#### **GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU & KASHMIR** OFFICE OF THE TEHSILDAR KREERI

(Executive Magistrate 1st Class)

#### **PUBLIC NOTICE**

The Registrar Births and Deaths (Block Development Officer Wagoora)/ chokedar hassubmitted case file pertaining to Birth of BHAT MOHAMMAD SUFIYAAN KHAN S/O UMMAR MAJEED BHAT R/O VIZER Tehsil WAGOORA Distt. Baramulla having verified the date of Birth as 12/10/2020 and event has been shown to be occured at SDH KREERI for issuance of delay order .In this connection . if anyone have any objection to the issuance of delay order of Birth certificate shall present his/her claim this office within 07 days, after that no objection shall be entertained.

Executive Magistrate 1st Class KREERI

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

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

#### **PUBLIC NOTICE**

The Registrar Births and Deaths (Block Development Officer Wagoora)/ chokedar hassubmitted case file pertaining to Birth of MOHAMMAD HAMAAD MIR S/O FAYAZ AHMAD MIR R/O KACHWA MUQAM Tehsil WAGOORA Distt. Baramulla having verified the date of Birth as 12/12/2018 and event has been shown to be occured at SDH KREERI for issuance of delay order .In this connection . if anyone have any objection to the issuance of delay order of Birth certificate shall present his/her claim this office within 07 days, after that no objection shall be entertained.

Executive Magistrate 1st Class KREERI

OFFICE OF THE TEHSILDAR KREERI

#### **PUBLIC NOTICE**

The Registrar Births and Deaths (Block Development Officer Wagoora)/ chokedar hassubmitted case file pertaining to Birth of MOHAMMAD ZOHAAN KHAN S/O MUKHTAR AHMAD KHAN R/O VIZER Tehsil WAGOORA Distt. Baramulla having verified the date of Birth as 03/02/2022 and event has been shown to be occured at SDH KREERI for issuance of delay order .In this connection . if anyone have any objection to the issuance of delay order of Birth certificate shall present his/her claim this office within 07 days, after that no objection shall be entertaine

Executive Magistrate 1st Class KREERI

School of Medicine -IUSOM) and Chairman of which were replied by the Afro-Eurasian Chamber experts. of Commerce, Education Pertinent to mention that the district falls under a Development, and Employment (ACCEDE).Prof. Ravi seismic zone V and also Jyee, a distinguished expert in disaster management,

shared valuable insights on

proactive preparedness,

risk mitigation strategies,

and effective response

frameworks.The event pro-

for attendees to discuss

contemporary disaster

management challenges

and explore solutions for

enhancing coordination

faces the challenges of slides, accidents and snow storms. Sometimes the cases of fire incidents have been witnessed on a large scale.The session was highly productive and focused vided an engaging platform on brainstorming innovative ideas. The District Administration emphasized its commitment to fostering community awareness and preparedamong stakeholders.Vari- ness to minimize the ous officers put their que- impact of disasters.

هر خاص عام کو اطلاع دی جاتی هے که ادهار کاڈ زیر نمبر 2254 2267 6930 مین بیٹی کانام مصبا جان انراج هویی هے جب که اصل نام مطابق سکول رکاڈ مصبا گلزار هے اب اس کی دستگی کرانی مطلوب ھے کسی کو کوپی عزر ھو تو وہ سات یوم کے اندر اندر دفتر هزا مین پیس کرے بعاد از معاد كويى عزر قبول نهين هو گاالمستهر

ساکن ماگرےپوراچھ بل اننت ناگ کسَّمیر

درخواست منجانب سائل غلام حمين نجار ولدعبدل رحمان نجار سائحنه سيخبوره بمراد حصول OBC سرنفيكيك تحت ايس اراو .126 / 294 بحق دختر

اشتهار بمراد آگاهی معاملیمندر جانوان الصدر میں درخواست سائل علامی المعامل الم سائنہ میزبہ طرف میں زیرکاروائی ہے اس نبیت رپورٹ پٹواری سے ب عيال ہوتا ہے سائل کا محمنبه (05) افراد پر متتل ہے کنبید کی سالانہ آمدانی 37000 تک ہے سائل کے افراد فاند مندرجہ ذیل ہے 1. غلام حيين نجار ولدعبد لرخمان نجار سر بره 58 سال تر كھال 2.. ظنيه بيكم زوجه 56, مال گھريلوكام

3... مدسراحمد نجار پسر 28سال. تر کھان 4...ریهانه بانو بهو ، 26سال گھریلوکام

5...اسراحن دختر19 سال زيرتعليم اسكےعلاوہ کوئی بھی افراد نیں بتلایا گیاہے لہازاتمام عوام خاص وعام کوبزریعہ اشتہارمطالع تحیاجا تاہے کہا گرتھی کو سٹیفیکٹ نکالنے میں کوئی عرر یااعتراض ہوتووہ اپناعور یااعتراض ساتھ دن کےاندراندر پیش کریں معاد گزرنے کے بعد ُ كوئء دريااعتراض قابل قبول نيں ہوگا

نائب تحصيلداركريري

**GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU & KASHMIF** OFFICE OF THE TEHSILDAR KREERI

#### **PUBLIC NOTICE**

The Registrar Births and Deaths (Block Development Officer Wagoora)/ chokedar hassubmitted case file pertaining to Birth of AISHA QADIR D/O GHULAM QADIR KHAN R/O SALOOSA Tehsil KREERI Distt. Baramulla having verified the date of Birth as 01/07/2020 and event has been shown to be occured at SDH KREERI for issuance of delay order. In this connection. if anyone have any objection to the issuance of delay order of Birth certificate shall present his/her claim this office within 07 days, after that no objection shall be entertained.

Executive Magistrate 1st Class KREERI

#### Work/Contract Deposit (EMD) **Documents in shape of** (In Rs.) @ 10 % (in Rs.) **Demand Draft (Non-**Refundable) (In Rs.) 1 One (1) year Outsourcing of entry from the date ticketing System of 4,74,600.0 47,460.00 1,000/of award of

of Reserve

The bidding document(s) consisting of qualifying information, eligibility criteria, BOQ (Bill of quantity) terms and conditions and other details can be seen/downloaded through the Departmental website

<u>www.dofkashmir.com/www.jktenders.gov.in</u> as per schedule of date given below:-		
1.	Period of downloading of bidding document	21.02.2025 from 03:30 PM to
		13.03.2025 up to 02:00 PM
2.	Bid submission Start Date	21.02.2025 from 04:00 PM
3.	Bid submission End date	13.03.2025 up to 02:00 PM
4.	Date and time of Opening of Tenders (Online)	17.03.2025 at 02:00 PM

DIPK-12297/24

Date: Feb 21 2025

Sd/-**Accounts Officer, Member Secretary)** Floriculture Department, Kashmir.

**Cost of Tender** 

**HT-KASHMIR** 

### Sakeena Itoo reviews development scenario of D H Pora Constituency Emphasizes time bound completion of projects, smooth implementation of welfare schemes

#### **■** Farooq Rather

VEAR OF PUBLICATION HEADLINES

KULGAM, FEBRUARY 21: Minister for Health and Medical Education. Social Welfare and Education, Sakeena Itoo, today chaired a meeting here to assess the developmental scenario of D H Pora Constituency of Kulgam district.

During the meeting, the Minister had detailed assessment regarding progress on implementation of various flagship schemes like Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM), Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), Revamped Distribution Sector Scheme (RDSS), Holistic Agriculture Development Programme (HADP) and District Capex, among others.

Addressing the officers, Sakeena Itoo emphasized on completion of all developmental projects in the constituency within the stipulated time frame. She instructed the officers of Jal Shakti department to ensure smooth operation of irrigation schemes, especially during the upcoming farming season across the district. She also called on the officers of the forest department to establish timber depots in all blocks of DHPora constituency to meet the local needs, especially during winters.

Regarding the education sector, Sakeena Itoo directed the concerned officers to identify land for construction of school buildings operating from rented spaces. She reiterated



the commitment of the present Government towards enhancing facilities in educational institutions and ensuring quality education for the students.

The Minister affirmed that the government under Chief Minister Omar Abdullah's leadership is committed towards holistic development of the region by prioritizing key infrastructure and welfare initiative programmes for the general public.

During the meeting, the Chief Planning Officer delivered an extensive presentation detailing the physical and financial milestones of various ongoing projects.

Deputy Commissioner Kulgam, Athar Aamir Khan; Additional Deputy Commissioner; DPO; Assistant Commissioner Development; Assistant Commissioner Revenue; Additional Superintendent of Police; Executive Engineers; Chief Education Officer; Chief Medical Officer and other officials attended the meeting.

Later, the Minister met several public delegations to listen to their issues and demands for early redressal. The Minister affirmed that the government under Chief Minister Omar Abdullah's leadership is committed towards holistic development of the region by prioritizing key infrastructure and welfare initiative programmes for the general public.

During the meeting, the Chief Planning Officer delivered an extensive presentation detailing the physical and financial milestones of various ongoing projects.

### **MLA Beerwah inaugurates Mobile Surgical Eye** Camp, Biochemistry Analyzer at SDH Magam

#### **HT News Network**

Budgam, February 21: In a significant boost to the healthcare infrastructure in Magam, MLA Beerwah, Dr. Shafi Ahmad Wani today inaugurated a mobile surgical eye camp and a fully automatic biochemistry analyzer at Sub-DistrictHospital(SDH)Magam, in presence of Director Health Services Kashmir Dr Bakshi jahangeer.

The inauguration ceremony was attended by **Director Health Services** Kashmir, Dr. Jahangeer Ahmad Bakshi; Assistant Director Health Services Kashmir, Dr. Muzaffar Sharewani; Chief Medical Officer Budgam, Dr. Mohd Ayoub Fatehkhan, Dr Asmat IC mobile eye camp and Chairman Civil Society Magam, Haji Mohammad Ibrahim Mir; besides oth-



er senior health officials. Speaking at the event, MLA Beerwah Dr. Shafi

Ahmad Wani assured that he would work tirelessly to ensure the hospital receives the best facilities. He appreciated the Block Medical Officer and staff for their exceptional services to the people of Magam and surrounding areas.

MLA Beerwah also urged the Director Health Services Kashmir to provide a expedite the resolution of pending hospital issues. Earlier, Dr. Mir Mushtaq,

Block Medical Officer Magam, welcomed the guests and presented a detailed overview of the hospital's functioning and challenges. He highlighted the need for advanced healthcare facilities in the region and expressed gratitude to MLA Beerwah for his relentless support.

Dr. Mohammad Ayoub, CMO Budgam, expressed gratitude to MLA Beerwah and Director Health Services Kashmir for the surgical eye camp and biochemistry analyzer, which will greatly benefit the local

population. The mobile surgical eye camp and biochemistry analyzer will significantly enhance the healthcare facilities at SDH Magam, benefiting thousands of patients of the area.

### **State Taxes Department organises workshop** on safety of women at Workplace

#### **■** HT News Network

SRINAGAR, FEBRUARY 21: State Taxes Department on Friday organised a workshop on Empowering Women and Ensuring Safety at workplaces.

The programme was held under the guidance of Commissioner State Taxes, PK Bhat.

Besides Tabasum Kamili, Deputy Commissioner Appeals who presided over the programme, the event was attended by Additional Commissioner State Taxes Kashmir Parveez Ahmad Raina, and various other officers.

Speaking at the event, Deputy Commissioner Appeals, emphasized the importance of collective efforts in combating harassment, ensuring strict enforcement of laws, and fostering a culture of



respect and safety for

Guest speaker Dr. Aneeda, Assistant Professor at Kashmir University said that women harassment is not just an act but a deep-rooted mindset that must be challenged.

"Empowerment begins with awareness, but true change comes with action. It is our collective duty to educate, report, and stand up against all forms of harassment.", she said.

A society that protects

its women, protects its

future, She said and

emphasized the need for

stronger legal enforce-

ment, community vigi-

lance, and early education

to dismantle the culture of

The workshop witnessed

thought-provoking discus-

sions led by esteemed

Inspector Qaisar Qureshi

& Inspector Monisa, along

with the dedicated efforts

of organizing fellow Par-

harassment.

Their insights emphasized the need for strict legal enforcement, community awareness, and a proactive approach to tackling harassment in all spheres of life.

The session also featured poetic renditions by Nasir Ahmad, whose verses beautifully captured the struggles and resilience of women, leaving a lasting impact on the audience.

In his address, Additional Commissioner State Taxes Kashmir emphasized that women harassment is not just an individual struggle but a societal failure which demands urgent action from all corners. He highlighted that true empowerment begins when every woman feels safe, heard, and respected, not just in laws and policies but in everyday reality.

#### Free Awareness & Screening **Camp for Cleft Lip & Palate Patients at District Hospital Bandipora**

#### HT News Network

Bandipora, February 21: In a significant healthcare initiative, Smile Train India, in collaboration with the Chief Medical Officer (CMO) Bandipora, is organizing a free awareness and screening camp for individuals suffering from cleft lip, cleft palate, nasal, facial, and cranial deformities. The camp will be held on February 27, 2025, at District Hospital Bandipora, with the goal of identifying and assisting patients in need of corrective surgery and medical intervention. Patients are urged to register for the camp before February 26, 2025, by contacting 7889440542 or 6005879092. This initiative is part of Smile Train India's ongoing efforts to provide free surgical care and rehabilitation to children and adults affected by cleft-related conditions. Cleft lip and palate are among the most common birth defects which if left untreated lead to difficulties in speech, eating, breathing, and overall facial development. The Khyber Medical Institute, Nowpora Srinagar, will be an integral part of this initiative, providing medical expertise and post-operative care.

#### DC Kulgam reviews status of Jal **Shakti Assets**

**■** Farooq Rather



KULGAM, FEBRUARY 21: Deputy Commissioner, Kulgam Athar Aamir Khan today convened a meeting to review the status of Jal Shakti Assets in the district here at the Mini-Secretariat.

The meeting had threadbare discussions with regard to various assets created by Jal Shakti Department and their subsequent verification and uploading on the revenue Department's portal Revenue Plus.

The meeting was attended by ADC Viqar Ahmed Giri, ACR Mushtaq Ahmad Lone, Xen's of Jal Shakti Division Kulgam, Qazigund and all the Tehsildars of District.

### DC Shopian reviews status of developmental works of departments

#### **HT News Network**

laparoscope and digital

X-ray machine to the hos-

pital, in addition to upgrad-

ing the existing hospital

infrastructure and utilizing

the old hospital complex as

Director Health Services

Kashmir, Dr. Jahangeer

Ahmad Bakshi, assured

MLA Beerwah that all

issues raised during the

function would be

addressed on a priority

basis, with efforts made to

a trauma hospital.

Shopian, February, 21: The Deputy Commissioner (DC) Shopian, Shishir Gupta today convened a meeting of district and sectoral officers at Mini-Secretariat to take detailed review of the developmental progress in various departments.During the meeting, several aspects pertaining to overall development were comprehensively discussed. On the occasion, all the departments presented the status of various developmental works undertaken in different sectors like health, education, rural development, PDD, Sports, etc by the concerned agencies.

While taking sector wise review of various major developmental works, the DC emphasized for adopting a coordinated approach for



achieving the desired results. He stressed to ramp up the pace of work so that all the undertaken projects are completed

well within the stipulated time. DC emphasized the importance of effective interdepartmental coordination and urged officials to proactively address any impediments in the work execution.He called upon strengthening the public delivery services and grievance

redressal system in the district. Among others ADDC, Dr. Nasir Ahmad Lone, Dr. Zakir Hussain Faaz, SE R&B, ACR, ACD and other district and Sectoral officers were present in the meeting. During the meeting, several aspects pertaining to overall development were comprehensively discussed. On the occasion, all the departments presented the status of various developmental works undertaken in different sectors like health, education, rural development, PDD, Sports, etc by the concerned agencies.

### **FSD Anantnag imposed heavy** fines on FBOS for violations and Mis-branded qualities and

#### **■** HT News Network

ANANTNAG, FEBRUARY 21: Additional Deputy Commissioner Anantnag Fayaz Ahmad Banday, who is also Adjudicating Officer Under Food Safety & Standards Act, 2006 imposed a penalty of Rs. 206000 on various Food Business Operators for contravention of the Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006 & Rules and Regulations, 2011.

The penalty has been imposed in exercise of the powers vested with Additional Deputy Commissioner under Section 68 of FSS Act,

2006. The accused during the trial of the cases filed by the Food Safety Department were convicted as they were found violating the regulatory provisions of law on the subject. During the trial, it was revealed that the FBOs had breached regulatory provisions, leading to their products being of Sub-standard operation of high risk food businesses under unhygienic condi-

The Additional Deputy Commissioner after considering the complaints filled by the Food Safety Department and the submissions made by the authorized counsels on behalf of the accused came to the conclusion that the charges of contravention of aforementioned provisions of Food Safety and Standards act were substantiated and warranted imposition of penalty on the accused to the extent of the provisions of Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006.

Further, the Assistant Commissioner, Food Safety District Anantnag Zameer Sahab, warned FBOs to desist from fraudulent practices failing which stern action as per law shall follow against those who are found violating the different provisions of Food Safety & Standards Act, 2006.

### **CUKashmir commemorates intl mother languages day**

#### HT News Network

Ganderbal, Feb 21: The Directorate of Students Welfare (DSW) in association with the School of Languages, Central University of Kashmir (CUKashmir) Friday commemorated the "International Mother Languages Day-2025" at varsity's Green Campus here.

Addressing the participants, former Head Deptt of Kashmiri, University of Kashmir and Convenor Sahitya Academy, Prof. Shad Ramzan said, the Kashmiri language has been a medium of rich literary expression, with poets like Lal Ded and Sheikh Noor-ud-din Noorani (RA) shaping Kashmiri mysticism and thought. "Kashmiri literature, both classical and contemporary, reflects the social, and spiritual ethos of the region," Prof. Shad

He further said that "Language is more than just a means of communication; it



embodies the history, traditions, and soul of a community. It is our responsibility to preserve and promote our mother tongue for future generations." Prof. Shad Ramzan also highlighted the intrinsic connection between language and cultural expression, urging students and scholars to actively participate in linguistic preservation initiatives. He said the languages are the bedrock of cultural heritage as they encapsulate traditions, folklore, and oral histories passed down through generations. "The celebration of International Mother Languages Day fosters awareness and encourages efforts to revitalize and sustain native languages,"

he added.Earlier, Dean DSW, Prof. Irfan Aalam in his welcome address, said the Day serves as a powerful platform to reiterate the importance of linguistic heritage. "By bringing together scholars, students, and cultural practitioners, the university reinforced its dedication to the revitalization of Kashmiri," Prof. Irfan said and asked the participants to actively contribute towards the preservation of their mother tongue, ensuring that the legacy of Kashmiri language continues to thrive for generations to come.

Assistant Prof. Dr. Masarat Shah conducted the programme proceedings and Coordinator Deptt of Kashmiri, Dr. Imtiyaz Mustafa proposed the vote of thanks. Addressing the participants, former Head Deptt of Kashmiri, University of Kashmir and Convenor Sahitya Academy, Prof. Shad Ramzan said, the Kashmiri language has been a medium of rich literary expression, with poets like Lal Ded and Sheikh Noor-ud-din Noorani (RA).

**HT-NEWS** 

## Speaker LA reviews progress on **new Legislative Assembly Complex**

Sets deadline of 18 months for R&B to complete prestigious project

#### **HT News Network**

YEAR OF PUBLICATION THEADLINES

JAMMU, FEBRUARY 21: Speaker, Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly, Abdul Rahim Rather, today convened a meeting with senior officers to review progress on construction of new Legislature Complex

Secretary, PWD (R&B), Bhupinder Kumar; Secretary, Law, Justice & Parliamentary Affairs, Achal Sethi; DG, Budget, Mohammad Sultan; DG Codes, Mahesh Dass; Secretary, JKLA, Manoj Kumar Pandit; Chief Engineer R&B Jammu; SER&B, South Circle Jammu and other senior officers of



concerned department and Assembly Secretariat were present in the meeting.

Threadbare discussions were held on the issues pertaining to construction of new Assembly Complex in view of recent cabinet

A detailed presentation

about various phases of project execution was given by the Executive Engineer in charge of the project through Power-

Point Presentation. The Secretary PWD(R&B) informed the Speaker regarding the action taken on the directions given by the Council of Ministers. It was informed that the DPR of balance work has been submitted to IIT Jammu for vetting. As soon as vetting of DPR is received, tendering process shall be initi-

He also assured the Speaker that all modalities for the tendering process will be completed by 31st of March 2025. The Speaker directed the

Executing Agency to complete the project within 18 months after award of contract. He stressed upon them to immediately start the construction works on the new Assembly Complex after completion of the tendering process.

### **JMC Commissioner listens to people's** grievances at Raghunath Bazar, Nanak Nagar

#### ■ HT News Network

IAMMU, FEBRUARY 21: Commissioner Jammu Municipal Corporation, Dr. Devansh Yadav today conducted an inspection of the Nanak Nagar area after receiving complaints regarding water logging due to a blocked Nallah.

During the visit, Dr. Yadav assessed the situation and interacted with local residents, who were facing inconvenience due to the clogging of the drainage. He assured immediate steps by the Corporation to clear the blockage and restore smooth water flow. He also emphasized that necessary preventive measures would be implemented well before the onset of the monsoon season to avoid similar issues in the



infrastructure and public amenities in the area. Members of the Raghunath Bazaar Market Asso-

ciation took this opportu-

reviewed the works under-

taken by Jammu Smart City

Limited to enhance urban

representation to the Commissioner, highlighting key concerns and demands of the trader community. The representation emphasized the need for renovation of interior lanes, improvement of street lighting, and enhanced sanitation facilities to further boost the market's appeal and func-

He assured the Association of necessary steps to address the highlighted issues. He reiterated the JMC's commitment to improving civic amenities and fostering a cleaner, well-lit and more accessible commercial environment in Raghunath Bazar. Later, the Commissioner visited Raghunath Bazaar to assess ongoing development activities. He reviewed the works undertaken by Jammu Smart City Limited to enhance urban infrastructure and public amenities in the area. Members of the Raghunath Bazaar Market Association took this opportunity to submit a representation to the Commissioner, highlighting key

concerns and demands of

the trader community.

### Saansad Adarsh Gram Yojana (SAGY)

### **Workshop on Digital Literacy hosted for Science Teachers**

#### ■ HT News Network

SAMBA, FEBRUARY 21: A Capacity Building workshop on Digital Literacy and Virtual Hub was conducted today for Science Teachers here at Panchayat Ghar Palli in Block Bari Brahmana.

The program was organized under the Village Development Plan of Saansad Adarsh Gram Yojana (SAGY by the JKSTIC (Jammu & Kashmir Science, Technology & Innovation Council), in collaboration with the Rural Development Department.

The training featured insightful guest lectures by Dr. Shubnandan Jamwal, Associate Professor, Department of Computer Science and IT and Dr. Jaswinder Singh, Deputy Director (Technical), NIELIT Jammu. They provided in-depth sessions on digital literacy, virtual learning platforms, and the role of technology in modern

Additionally, they educated participants on the phishing attacks, cyber security measures, and the rising number of cyber



scams occurring in India, emphasizing the importance of online safety and digital awareness among educators.

While the training promoted the integration of technology in education, experts also discussed the downsides of excessive technology use. To counter these challenges, participants were encouraged to adopt digital well-being practices, such as balancing screen time, using technology mindfully, and promoting offline activities for holistic learning.

The Guest of Honour, Shruti Khanna, District Coordinator, JKSTIC, Department of Science and Technology, highlighted the significance of digital transformation in education, particularly in rural areas.

## **DDC reviews performance of Rural Development Department in Reasi**

#### **HT News Network**

REASI, FEBRUARY 21: District Development Commissioner (DDC) Reasi, Nidhi Malikon Friday chaired a high-level meeting to assess the working and performance of the Rural Development Department (RDD) schemes. The review covered key initiatives such as MGNREGA, the CAPEX budget, Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana-Gramin (PMAY-G), and the Aspirational Block Development Program. DDC emphasized the importance of effective implementation and urged officials to enhance their efforts in improving rural infrastructure and livelihood opportunities.

The DDC directed Block Development Officers (BDOs) to personally visit each Panchayat to motivate beneficiaries to expedite the construction of PMAY-G houses.



She also stressed the importance of maintaining close coordination with Tehsildars to ensure the recovery process from defaulters. By streamlining these efforts, she highlighted the need to boost the overall progress under the scheme and ensure that eligible beneficiaries receive timely support.

Further, the DDC instructed BDOs to revisit their developmental plans, with a strong focus on water conservation and sustainability. She also outlined a vision to establish a playground in every Panchayat, reinforcing the administration's commitment to improving public amenities and recreational facilities for the youth. These initiatives, she stated, would contribute to a well-rounded rural development strategy.

DDC further emphasized the role of education in community development and urged BDOs to conduct regular school visits to monitor and improve literacy rates, particularly among females. She reaffirmed the administration's commitment to ensuring that BDOs remain accessible to the public and actively engage with local communities. The meeting concluded with a call for collaborative efforts to accelerate rural development and improve the quality of life for residents. CPO Reasi Narinder Kumar, ACD Pardeep Kumar, BDOs were present during the meeting.

## **DC reviews functioning of Common Service Centres in Poonch District**

#### HT News Network

POONCH, FEBRUARY 21: Deputy Commissioner Poonch, Vikas Kundal, today chaired a meeting to review the progress of ongoing government projects facilitated through Common Service Centres (CSCs). The meeting aimed to ensure that the general public can effectively access portal-based services in the district.

District Manager of CSC, Imtiaz Ahmed, provided an overview of the CSC operations and the services offered. It was reported that there are 330 Village Level Entrepreneurs (VLEs) in the district, with at least one CSC available in 216 Gram Panchayats. Additionally, 22 CSC touchpoints have been established in government offices across the district.



During the discussions, CSC operators raised concerns regarding network issues, which were acknowledged by the Deputy Commissioner. He assured that these matters would be addressed promptly.

The DC emphasized the need for service provider agencies to enhance efforts in opening more CSCs in remote areas. He highlighted the importance of resuming all CSC operations to facilitate public registration for welfare schemes like PM-KISSAN, AYUSHMAN BHARAT, PMSYM, PMJDY, and Digipay, as well as for obtaining domicile certificates. He reiterated that CSCs are crucial access points for essential

Furthermore, the Deputy Commissioner instructed the Centre Operators to work in an organized manner and establish a regulatory body to improve operational effectiveness. He cautioned against overcharging and delays in service delivery to prevent any repercussions.

The meeting was attended by key officials including GM DIC Poonch, ACR, ACD, ACP, DSWO, CMO, LDM Poonch, and the District Manager CSC Poonch, along with the Village Level Entrepreneurs.

### 43 bn CRPF flags off Bharat Darshan **Tour for 20 Kashmiri youth**

#### **HT News Network**

Srinagar, Feb 21: As part of the Civic Action Program, the 43 Battalion Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) flagged off a five-day Bharat Darshan Tour for 20 students from Budgam.

The tour was inaugurated by R Jayakumar, Commanding Officer (CO) of 43 Bn CRPF, during a ceremony held at the District Police Lines (DPL) Srinagar, a statement issued to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) reads.

The students, accompanied by a caretaker, will visit Delhi and Agra, where they will explore historical and cultural landmarks. The initiative covers all boarding and lodging arrangements, air travel, and other logistical support.

During the flag-off event, CO 43 Bn interacted with the students and high-



lighted the significance of the tour in fostering national unity. He encouraged them to embrace the diversity of India and gain valuable insights from their journey. Each participant was provided with travel essentials, including tracksuits, shoes, and bags.Parents and students expressed their gratitude to CRPF for organizing the trip, calling it a unique opportunity to explore new places and broaden their horizons-

## JU Udhampur Campus hosts awareness session on Nature-Based Solutions for a Sustainable Livelihood

#### **■** HT News Network

UDHAMPUR, FEBRUARY 21: The Udhampur Campus of the University of Jammu, in collaboration with the J&K Science, Technology & Innovation Council Udhampur Department of Science & Technology Government of J&K, on Friday organised a one-day Awareness Programme on "Nature-Based Solutions for a Sustainable Livelihood and Future."

Head, Entomology Division, SKUAST- Jammu Prof. R.K Gupta, Member, J&K Kissan Advisory Board Tejinder Singh Wazir and a prominent agri-entrepreneur of Jammu were the resource persons of the awareness program which was attended by the

students and teaching staff of the Government Degree College, Boys, Government Degree College for Women, GDC, Reasi, Bhaskar Degree College, Bhartiya College, Govt. High School Garnai, research scholars of the Department of Botany, University of Jammu, women entrepreneurs of Udhampur and members of the civil society of Garnai-Lotta, Udham-

Addressing the gathering, Prof. Yash Pal Sharma, the Campus Rector emphasized the significance of adopting nature-based solutions to tackle environmental and livelihood challenges. 'NEP 2020 also emphasizes on the innovations, skill development and entrepreneurship ventures and such awareness events add to the



skill-based knowledge and its applicability, said Prof Sharma. He underlined the need of including sustainable practices into daily life and urged faculty and students to explore innovative approaches for environmental protection.Prof. Sharma also conveyed his heartfelt appreciation to

Shruti Khanna, District Coordinator, J&K STIC, Udhampur, J&K, for her exceptional collaboration and coordination with the Udhampur Campus to seamlessly organize the event.

In the morning session, an insightful talk on the topic "Where the Beauty(flowers) Meets Business" was

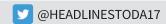
delivered by Mr. Wazir. Citing initiatives under the Atal Innovation Mission that supports sustainable agricultural startups, he spoke on the basics of the agri-business and rural hubs as a means to empower rural entrepreneurs. He emphasized that the micro-climatic conditions of Udhampur and Reasi are highly favourable for cultivating diverse crops, especially high-value horticulture and organic farming. Furthermore, he underscored the role of Self-Help Groups (SHGs) in engaging rural communities, particularly women, in income-generating agricultural activities, thereby ensuring economic stability and self-reliance. Wazir advised the inquisitive students to enter this profitable floribusiness gradually in order to earn a living and a safe future.

Dr. R.K. Gupta, Professor and Head, Division of Entomology, SKUAST-Jammu delivered on the world of Insects, human well-being, and ecosystem services. He highlighted the critical role insects play in maintaining the balance of nature, such as pollination, pest control, and decomposition, which directly impact human health, food security, and biodiversity. Dr. Gupta emphasized that a dynamic planet faces growing environmental risks, and it is crucial to anticipate global challenges to ensure long-term sustainability. Dr. Gupta also introduced an insightful discussion on insects as a source of technological innovation.











**HT-JAMMU** 

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## DC reviews implementation of health schemes, patient care scenario in Poonch District

**■** HT News Network

POONCH, FEBRUARY 21: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Poonch, Vikas Kundal chaired a meeting here on Friday to review the implementation of healthcare schemes and patient care status in the District.Initiating the meeting, DC Kundal conducted a comprehensive evaluation of achievements under the health schemes, functioning of health institutions, infrastructure upgrades, and healthcare services available to patients. Chief Medical Officer (CMO) Dr. Parvez Ahmed Khan gave an in-depth briefing through a PowerPoint presentation, detailing the health department's operations. This included insights into block-wise healthcare centers, infrastructure status, human resources in the health sector, and departmental achievements. The Deputy Commissioner assessed different operational aspects, including outpatient (OPD) and inpatient department (IPD) services, major and minor surgeries conducted, laboratory tests, institutional deliveries, ambulance services, staff rationalization, and the implementation of key health programs such as Janani Suraksha Yojana, Rashtriya Bal Swasthya Karyakram, National Tuberculosis Control Program, Anemia Mukt Bharat, and Jan Aushadhi Kendras, along with other online health services.To address staff management, the DC tasked the



department to start a rotation-wise system to meet requirements of medicos in underserved areas. To boost institutional deliveries at the block level, he emphasized the effective utilization of ASHAs in encouraging pregnant women and their families to access emergency services for safe deliveries. The DC also sought increased focus on immunization and vaccination efforts. The DC reiterated the importance of meeting patient expectations and delivering quality, accessible, and affordable healthcare. He stressed the need for coordination among senior

enhancement of healthcare infrastructure. He directed officers to closely monitor ongoing projects to ensure timely completion for the benefit of the public.

The Deputy Commissioner emphasized the importance of meeting both physical and financial targets for the current financial year. Heads of departments are urged to ensure these goals are achieved within the designated time frame. The meeting was attended by POICDS, CPO Poonch, CMO Poonch, CEO, EXEN PWD (R&B), EXEN Jal Shakti, EXEN JPDCL, Dy. CMO, District Tuberculosis Officer, District Immunization Officers, Block Medical Officers, ADMO Ayush and other concerned stakehold $ers. Chief Medical Officer (CMO) Dr. Parvez\,Ahmed\,Khan$ gave an in-depth briefing through a PowerPoint presentation, detailing the health department's operations. This included insights into block-wise healthcare centers, infrastructure status, human resources in the health sector, and departmental achievements. The Deputy Commissioner assessed different operational aspects, including outpatient (OPD) and inpatient department (IPD) services, major and minor surgeries conducted, laboratory tests, institutional deliveries, ambulance services, staff rationalization, and the implementation of key health programs such as Janani Suraksha Yojana, Rashtriya Bal Swasthya Karyakram, National Tuberculosis Control Program, Anemia Mukt Bhara.

### **DC inaugurates NCD** Screening campaign in **Poonch**

■ HT News Network

POONCH, FEBRUARY 21: Deputy Commissioner Vikas Kundal inaugurated the National level Non-Communicable Diseases (NCD) Screening and Tuberculosis (TB) campaign here today. The campaign aims at



detecting non-communicable diseases such as hypertension, diabetes and oral and cervical cancers. A medical camp has been set up at Bus Stand and the screening will continue till March 31, 2025. At the inauguration, the Deputy Commissioner encouraged the community to participate in large numbers to take advantage of the free screenings and treatment. He emphasized the importance of early detection and urged health authorities to maximize outreach efforts to ensure comprehensive coverage. During the camp, free medication was provided to attendees, addressing vital health concerns within the district.Chief Medical Officer Dr. Parvaiz Ahmed Khan highlighted that similar camps have been organized across Poonch, reinforcing the administration's commitment to public health. A dedicated team of doctors and health staff is present at the camp, ready to assist and educate the public about managing and preventing these diseases effectively.

### **Labour & Employment Department organises District-Level Awareness Workshop in Rajouri**

**HT News Network** 

RAJOURI, FEBRUARY 21: The Labour & Employment Department, Rajouri, today organized a District-Level Awareness Workshop at Dak Bungalow Rajouri to educate the public about various labour laws and welfare schemes available for registered construction workers.

The event was graced by DDC Chairperson Adv Naseem Liaquat and MLA Rajouri, Iftikhar Ahmed.

The DDC Chairperson suggested distributing pamphlets in local languages to ensure the general public understands the registration process and scheme benefits. He also called for launching a massive registration drive across the district and suggested that DDC members be consulted for maximum coverage of eligible beneficiaries. Additionally, he highlighted the role of social media in spreading awareness.

MLA Rajouri Iftikhar Ahmed called for extending awareness programs to far-flung areas. He further suggested that all MGNREGA job card



than 90 days in a financial year should be registered under the Labour Department's welfare schemes. He further proposed to conduct mega awareness programs in remote areas to maximize outreach.

Earlier, Assistant Labour Commissioner(ALC)PradyotGupta delivered a detailed PowerPoint presentation on labour laws and welfare schemes. He highlighted financial assistance provisions for registered workers in cases of natural death, accidental

disability, marriage assistance, education of their wards, and scholarships for students securing over 90% in Class 10th or 12th. Additionally, the registration process and prerequisite documents for availing these benefits were elaborated.

The workshop was attended by ACP Sheraz Chouhan, DSWO Abdul Raheem, Ex En PHE Ashwani Khajuria, other district and sectoral officers, prominent citizens, and members of the gen-

## holders who have worked for more death, chronic diseases, permanent eral public. **Agriculture department discusses strategy**

HT News Network

JAMMU, FEBRUARY 21: A meeting to discuss the promotion of lavender cultivation and the enhancement of its marketing linkages was held today at the Directorate of Agriculture, Krishi Bhawan Talab Tillo.

The meeting, chaired by Director Agriculture Jammu S. Arvinder Singh Reen, brought together different stakeholders to address the current challenges and opportunities in the lavender farming sector.

Meeting was attended by Joint Director Agriculture (Extension) Satish Sharma; CAO Anil Gupta; CAO Sanjay Anand; CAOSMG Singh; CAORam Gopal Sharma; CAO Harbans Singh; Dr. Lalit Mohan Professor & Head, Division of Forest Production & Utilization, Faculty of Horti-



for Promotion of Lavender Cultivation in Jammu Division

culture and Forestry, Ruchita Rane Head of Territory

Development J&K, PARC Mumbai, Raj Kumar Technical Officer (HADP) DAJ and other officers of the Department of Agriculture Jammu. Additionally, representatives of CSIR-IIIM, members of Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs), and lavender growers participated in the meeting via video conference. The key focus of the meeting was the marketing linkage challenges faced by lavender growers in Jammu Division. The Director addressed the current situation, highlighting the importance of strengthening the market access for lavender crops. He emphasized the enormous potential of aromatic crops in the Jammu region due to its diverse agro-climatic conditions and underscored the importance of introducing good practices for cultivating aromatic and medicinal plants to meet international quality standards.

#### **GDC Marh celebrates Int'l Mother Language Day**

HT News Network



JAMMU, FEBRUARY 21: To mark the Silver Jubilee celebration of International Mother Language Day, Government Degree College Marh organized a one day Dogri Cultural Programme.

Padam Shri Prof. Dr. Lalit Magotra was the chief guest. The programme started with the lighting of the lamp and SarastwatiVandana.

Principal of the college Prof (Dr) Rakesh Kumar Koul stressed on encouraging research on vernacular languages in educational systems particularly, in the regions with diverse linguistic backgrounds like Jammu and Kashmir.

PadamShri Prof. Dr. Lalit Magotra, in his introductory speech, talked about the significance of celebrating this occasion as it is dedicated to honoring our mother tongues, preserving regionallanguages and promoting cultural communication within the nation. He also stressed that every individual has to prove his respect, love for his mother tongue by speaking it with others and one should not forget the linguistic traditional roots that bind the community together. Other dignitaries who graced the occasion by presenting their poetry were Sushil Begana, Lal Chand and Pawan Verma.The students of the college presented melodious Dogri folk songs and folk Dances to amuse the gathering. The main highlight was the recitation of Dogri poems by the students of the Middle School, Marh namely Muskan, Kritika and Roshni. Plantation Drive was also carried out on the college campus by PadamShri Lalit Magotra and invited guests. The event also included the showcasing of local avian flora, Duggar kitchenware comprising Folk earthen utensils, schika, Kujja, Gaggar etc. and also served Dogra cuisines. All the students who participated in the event were felicitated with prizes. Refreshments were also served to the students. The proceedings of the event were conducted by Dr. Sheetal Devi (HOD, Dogri) and formal vote of thanks by Dr. Shiksha (Lecturer, Hindi).The overall programme was organized and coordinated by the members of the Cultural and Literary Committee of the college.

### **GCOE** organises plantation drive on Campus

HT News Network

JAMMU, FEBRUARY 21: The NSS Unit of Government College of Education (GCOE), under the guidance of NSS Programme Officer Professor Sarita Dogra, successfully organized a Plantation Drive on the college campus. The initiative aimed to promote environmental awareness and encourage sustainable practices among students.

Principal GCOE, Dr. Jyoti Parihar graced the occasion and highlighted the importance of afforestation in mitigating climate change and preserving biodiversity. She commended the NSS Unit for taking this significant step towards a greener future. The event witnessed the enthusiastic participation of 100 students, who actively planted saplings in various locations within the college premises. Faculty members, including Prof. Satish Sharma, Dr. Rajinder Kour, Prof. Deepali Devi, Prof. Kiran Thapa, Dr. Ambica Kumari, and Roopa Kumari, were also present and contributed to the success of the drive. Speaking on the occasion, Prof. Roopa emphasized the role of students in environmental conservation and encouraged them to take up similar initiatives in their communities. She expressed gratitude to all participants and faculty members for their support and dedication to making the event a success.

## DC reviews saturation of Agricultural credit schemes in Udhampur

HT News Network

UDHAMPUR, FEBRUARY 21: The overall implementation of agricultural credit schemes, including beneficiary registration, sanctioning and disbursement of cases under the HADP was reviewed by Deputy Commissioner Saloni Rai at a meeting with functionaries of Agriculture and allied departments, besides representatives of banks.

The DC emphasized the importance of improving farmers' access to institutional credit and strengthening the agriculture and



allied sectors. She urged officers and bankers to actively support the government's initiatives by encouraging greater participation from stakehold-

The DC directed all concerned departments and banks to ensure maximum outreach, covering every

farmer and farming family in the district under these schemes. She instructed officers to prepare an areawise list of beneficiaries to facilitate targeted implementation. She directed the departments to raise awareness among the public, identify interested beneficiaries, motivate them

to avail the benefits and submit the list within a day.The Bankers were advised to expedite the issuance of smart cards and update the latest data to streamline the credit process. The DC also underscored the need for blocklevel credit outreach camps to educate farmers about beneficiary-oriented schemes.

The DC highlighted the necessity of strong coordination between banks and government departments to ensure the seamless implementation of schemes that directly benefit the farming commu-

### **Kishtwar Admin hosts Snow Mela** to promote key initiatives of Government

**■** HT News Network

KISHTWAR, FEBRUARY 21: District Administration Kishtwar, under the leadership of Deputy Commissioner Rajesh Kumar Shavan, on Friday organized the Snow Mela at the historic Chowgan Ground to spread awareness about the government schemes like Beti Bachao Beti Padhao, Mission Yuva, Road Safety, Nasha Mukt Bharat Abhiyan, and Swachh Bharat Abhiyan, while also promoting tourism and local culture, the.

The event witnessed enthusiastic participation from thousands of citizens, artists, and dignitaries. The



grand celebration commenced with the lighting of the ceremonial lamp by senior government functionaries, followed by the singing of the National Anthem.The government departments set up informative stalls showcasing their schemes, products, and initiatives. The Deputy

Commissioner inspected the stalls and emphasized the importance of the Centrally Sponsored Schemes in accelerating the Socioeconomic development in the district. He highlighted the administration's efforts towards public welfare, youth empowerment, and educational development.

The cultural segment of the event featured captivating performances by renowned local singers, including Nidhi Aryan (Kishtwar Idol Winner, Junior Category), Zulkar Nain (Kishtwar Idol Runner-Up, Senior Category), Shriya Sharma (Runner-Up,JuniorCategory),Burhan Sheikh, Shafkat Rasool, Ali, Farhan, Muein Raja, Arohi Rana.Comedian and dancer Azil Farooq entertained the audience with his lively performance, adding a touch of humor and excitement. A mesmerizing group dance by Kishtwar Act Production further enriched the event's festive ambiance.





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#### **Telangana CM inaugurates** women-run Petrol Bunk in Narayanpet

**AGENCIES** 

NARAYANPET (TELANGANA), FEB 21 (UNI)

Telangana Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy inaugurated a petrol bunk set up by Zilla Mahila Samakhya (ZMS) at Appakpalli in Narayanpet district on Friday.

The facility, established in collaboration with BPCL, is the first petrol bunk in the state to be entirely run by women.

Speaking at the event, the Chief Minister expressed his delight in launching India's first women-managed petrol bunk under a women's association.

He reiterated his government's commitment to women's empowerment, emphasizing that women would remain a top priority in all state initiatives.

He highlighted the revival of women's selfhelp groups (SHGs) after the formation of the Praja government, noting that 67 lakh women are currently part of these groups, to make one crore women millionaires in

Revanth Reddy also pointed out that 600 RTC buses have been handed over to women as owners, ensuring economic independence. Additionally, he mentioned the government's plan to support women in setting up 1,000 MW solar power plants, as well as the establishment of Shilparamam stalls to help market products made by SHGs.

The Chief Minister announced plans to distribute two sarees per year to women in SHGs, ensuring they receive high-quality fabric, just as one would provide for their daughters. He further assured that the government would provide necessary funding for school maintenance, urging local authorities to ensure proper upkeep.

Revanth Reddy also sought cooperation from MP D K Aruna in securing funds from the central government to further promote women's development in Telangana.

He reaffirmed that the state government is ready to offer any necessary support to enhance women's opportunities and ensure their financial independence.

### **School of Ultimate Leadership** will play vital role in India's development: PM Modi

NEW DELHI, FEB 21 (UNI)

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday inaugurated the first edition of the School of Ultimate Leadership (SOUL) Leadership Conclave at Bharat Mandapam, and hailed it as a step towards becoming the "soul of India's social

Addressing the event, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said, "The School of Ultimate Leadership will tute is not just named 'SOUL', but is destined to tively.' become the very heart of India's social life.'

day and night for a 'developed India' of the 21st cen-

"In such a situation, even in a country of 140 in this transformation," he crore people, we need the added. best leadership in every sector, every vertical, and as a global powerhouse," every aspect of life," he he said this momentum is

Talking about the field. To sustain and Prime Minister Narendra need world-class leaders." Modi said, "Any counresources but also human resources. In the 21st centhese are not just a choice leadership."



play a vital role in India's tury, we need resources but a necessity," Prime development. This insti- that can drive innovation Minister noted. and channel skills effec-

"Skills are required in attending the two-day every sector, and leader- conclave in New Delhi, He added that today ship development is no said while addressing the every Indian is working exception-it demands event, "I want to make it new abilities. We must sci- clear from the very beginentifically accelerate lead- ning that I have no lesership development, and sons about leadership, I SOUL will play a vital role am hardly qualified for

Calling India "emerging

accelerating across every "SOUL institutions can

Bhutan Prime Minister Tshering Tobgay, who is it, I have come here as a student."

Praising PM Modi's leadership, Toggay said, "PM Modi, I see in you the image of an elder brother, who always guides and importance of SOUL, amplify this growth, we helps me. Prime Minister, my elder brother, you have put India on the path try that aims to progress be a game-changer in this of progress in just 10 years needs not only natural transformation. Inter- with your wisdom, cournational institutions like age and compassionate

### Notable developments in ties: **EAM Jaishankar to Chinese FM** Wang Yi in Johannesburg

JOHANNESBURG/NEW DELHI, FEB 21 (UNI)

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar held a meeting with Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi in Johannesburg, during which he observed that there have been "notable developments" in the bilateral ties, during the talks held at the NSA and Foreign Secretary level between both sides.

In his opening remarks during the meeting with Wang Yi, on the sidelines of the G20 Foreign Min- areas as well as other isters' Meeting in Johannesburg on Thursday, the EAM said that meetings like the current one "have views. provided an opportunity for our interaction even when our ties were going through a difficult phase".

global situation, our two countries have worked hard to preserve and protect the G20 as an institu-

the importance of international cooperation.

"Since our last meeting in Rio during the G20 Summit in November some notable developments. Our NSA and For-

China and there have been Doval, who is India's Spe-

'These have included management of peace and tranquility in the border in Beijing on December 18. dimensions of our ties.

have a further exchange of

"India and China are and BRICS. There are also tives will be to our mutual boundary questio. benefit."

"This in itself testifies to G20 Summit in Rio de and Minister of Foreign Janeiro, during which he Affairs of China. had noted that the implementation of the October both nations on disengage-2024, there have been ment at the LAC had pro-

> ceeded as planned. In December, Nation-

eign Secretary have visited al Security Advisor Ajit discussions about various cial Representative (SR) aspects of our relationship. on the boundary question, had met with Wang Yi for the 23rd meeting of the SRs

As agreed during the meeting of PM Narendra "I am glad today to Modi and Chinese President Xi Jinping in Kazan on October 23, the two SRs held discussions on the members of the G20, SCO management of peace and tranquility in the border regional and global issues areas and to explore a fair, "We should also rec- of mutual interest, where reasonable and mutually ognize that in a polarized an exchange of perspec- acceptable solution to the

> Wang Yi is Member of In November 2024, EAM the Political Bureau of the Jaishankar had met Wang Communist Party of China Yi on the sidelines of the (CPC) Central Committee

> In January this year, Foreign Secretary Vikram 21 agreement between Misri visited Beijing for the meeting of the Foreign Secretary-Vice Minister mechanism between the two sides.

#### Six of family returning from Maha Kumbh killed in road accident

**AGENCIES** 

A family of six returning to Patna, including four women and two men, died on the spot when their car collided with a parked truck near Dulhanganj market on R-Mohaniya national highway in Jagdishpur police station area in Bhojpur district on Friday morning.

Police said here that the speeding car collided with the parked truck near the Dulhin Bazar petrol pump. The incident took place on Friday morning when some devotees of Bihar were returning after taking the Maha Kumbh bath in Prayagraj.

The accident probably took place when Lal Babu Singh, who was driving the car, report-

edly fell asleep while driving, police said. All six devotees died on the spot. The deceased were identified as Karuna Devi (56), Asha Kiran (28) Joohi Rani (25), Priyam (20), Sanjay Kumar (60) and Lal Babu Singh (25).

The police had to make a lot of efforts to get the bodies out of the car. The bodies have been sent for postmortem.

#### Punjab: Elderly couple killed, 9 injured in road accident

PHAGWARA, FEB 21 (UNI)

An elderly couple died on the spot, and nine people were injured in a tragic road accident on the Phagwara-Hoshiarpur highway near

According to SHO Sadar Dilbag Singh, the deceased have been identified as Mukhtiar Singh (70) and his wife, Dharam Kaur, both residents of village Jagjitpur near Phagwara.

The accident occurred late last night when Mukhtiar Singh was returning home from a wedding ceremony in his car. As he approached the Dhande turn, a Swift car coming from the Phagwara side collided head-on with his vehicle. The impact was so severe that Mukhtiar Singh and his wife died

Nine other individuals sustained injuries in the crash and were rushed to the Civil Hospital for medical treatment.

Among the injured are Sukhwinder Singh (son of Mukhtiar Singh), Naina Devi, Avleen Kaur, and Gulraj Kaur (daughters of Sukhwinder Singh), and Samarveer (son of Sukhwinder Singh), while Mohan Lal, Binder, Mamta, and Barkha are occupants of the other car. The condition of all injured was said to be stable.

SHO Dilbag Singh stated that preliminary investigations suggest the accident occurred due to slippery road conditions caused by rain. The bodies of the deceased have been sent for post-mortem examination, which will be conducted on Saturday.

### SC tags Ashish Chanchlani's plea with Ranveer Allahbadia's case in FIR over online show

NEW DELHI, FEB 21 (UNI)

Friday issued a notice on a show India's Got Latent. petition filed by YouTuber Ashish Chanchlani, seek- Bench noted that Chanching to quash or transfer an lani had been granted FIR registered against him bail by the Gauhati High in Guwahati for allegedly Court and that the FIRs promoting obscenity in an stemmed from the same online show.

Justice N Kotiswar Singh week. tagged Chanchlani's petition along with that of pod- ary 18, the Supreme Court to shame."

caster Ranveer Allahbadia, the primary accused in the case for his controversial The Supreme Court on remarks on the YouTube

During the hearing, the show, where Allahbadia A bench comprising had already been granted



without legal representa- accused. tion inside the police sta-

he made no objectionable coming weeks.

The Apex Court directed remarks during the show that he must fully cooper- and that the allegations ate with the investigation primarily targeted his co-

The FIR, filed by Guwahati Police on February Chanchlani, in his writ 10, invokes provisions of petition, has challenged the Bhartiya Nyay Santhe FIR lodged at the Cyber hita (BNS), the Informa-Police Station, Guwahati tion Technology Act, the Crime Branch, Assam, Cinematograph Act, and stayed Allahbadia's arrest seeking either its quash- the Indecent Representawhile condemning his ing or transfer to Mumbai, tion of Women (Prohibi-Justice Surya Kant and interim relief earlier in the remarks as "vulgar," stat- where a similar case was tion) Act. The Supreme ing that he had a "dirty registered earlier. His Court is expected to hear Significantly, on Febru- mind, which put society legal counsel argued that the matter further in the

#### Fresh snowfall on higher reaches of Himachal

**AGENCIES** 

SHIMLA, FEB 21 (UNI)

Himachal Pradesh witnessed major snowfall and rainfall in the past 24 hours, leading to a sharp drop in temperatures across various regions.

Heavy snowfall was recorded in several locations, with Gondla receiving 42 cm, Keylong 36 cm, and Kukumseri 24.3 cm. Other areas including Jot (16 cm) and Khadrala (15 cm), also experienced fresh snow.

### UP poised to become trillion dollar economy by 2029: Yogi

LUCKNOW, FEB 21 (UNI)

Chief Minister Yogi Adity-1 trillion dollar economy

Replying to a question raised by Samajwadi Party Rs 12 lakh crore to a profiscal 2024-25 while reafing a 1 trillion dollar economy by 2029.

Criticising the opposigrowth. He said that India youth," he said. has emerged as a major driven by personal agen-

He said that to give

impetus to economic growth his government anath on Friday said that has identified 10 key sec-Uttar Pradesh is rap- tors, including industrial idly progressing toward development, agriculture, becoming India's largest social security, urban economy and will achieve development, revenue colthe target of becoming a lection, education, health, tourism, and the service sector. "Each sector undergoes a monthly review by the senior officers, minis-(SP) MLA Ragini Sonkar, ters concerned with which the CM said that the state's I myself conduct a quareconomy has grown from terly assessment," he said.

The CM said that investjected Rs 27.5 lakh crore ment proposals of Rs 40 by the end of the current lakh crore were received during the Global Invesfirming the goal of achiev- tors Summit 2023, out of which proposals of Rs 15 lakh crore have been brought on the ground. "Of tion, he said that those this several industries have who refuse to acknowl- started production. This edge India's progress as investment is expected a developed nation also to generate employment question UP's economic opportunities for 60 lakh

He said that this is the global economy, which same state whose Credit may not sit well with those Deposit (CD) ratio was 44 percent, which has now exceeded 60 percent, Yogi said, "However, indicating that the capital now holds the fifth-largest reinvested within the state. economy globally and is "The Reserve Bank of India poised to become a 5 tril- (RBI) report highlights lion dollar economy by UP as the leading state in



a crucial role," he said.

Yogi said that people who once lacked bank accounts now have substantial savings, demonstrating increased purchasing power and financial security which has been made possible by Prime Minister Modi's visionary policies.

the country in MSME units, a sector that had previously suffered due to neglect by past governments. However, initiatives like One District One Product (ODOP) revitalised MSMEs. During the Covid pandemic, skill mapping of 40 lakh the reality is that India of Uttar Pradesh is being migrant workers linked them to the MSME sector, resulting in employment for over two crore people."

He said, "Marking a sig-

the last five-year plan, with entrepreneurs, the gov-Jan Dhan accounts playing ernment launched the 'CM Yuva Udyam Yojana' on the UP's Foundation Day

Rs five lakh are provided Rs 10 lakh. The scheme has He said, "UP now leads

> ted so far." cultural sector, the CM tural growth." said that before 2017, the condition of farmers was half times the price of their ous sectors. produce."

earn Rs 2,300 per quintal those who doubt UP's for paddy, against produc- ability to achieve a 1 tril-

Addressing sugarcane its vision. farmers payments, Yogi player in ethanol produc-

He said, "The governare reaching farmers phase, with the second benefit transfers (DBT) phase offering loans up to and procurement centres, ensuring financial stabilreceived an overwhelming ity and additional income. response, with over 96 The government further lakh applications submit- supports farmers by proformation in UP's agri- its commitment to agricul-

Discussing women's empowerment, Yogi said dire, but today, they are that 20 percent of all UP global recognition," he thriving. "Unlike in the Police recruitments have said. past, where distress led been reserved for women, to farmer suicides, they creating employment Maha Kumbh alone will now receive one and a opportunities across vari-

He said that farmers opposition, he said that growth.

tion costs of Rs 1,100 per lion dollar economy in five quintal. "Similarly, wheat years are driven by negafarmers are receiving tivity, while the governdouble their cost," he said. ment remains steadfast in

He accused the presaid that payments are vious Samajwadi Party now made within a week, government of turning making UP the leading UP into a 'BIMARU' state sugarcane-producing state and pushing it to the in the country and a top sixth or seventh position in India's economic rankings. "However, due to the double-engine government has also introduced ment's efforts in the last special schemes for pulses eight years, UP has now on January 24. Under this and oil seeds, boosting emerged as India's secondscheme, bank loans up to farmers' incomes. Funds largest economy," he said.

The CM expressed conat zero interest in the first directly through direct fidence that by 2029, UP will become the largest economy in the country, reaching the 1 trillion dollar milestone.

He also highlighted UP's booming tourism sector, viding free seeds for pulses revealing that in 2023, the Highlighting the trans- and oil seeds, reinforcing state welcomed 65 crore tourists. "With the Maha Kumbh, more than 60 crore devotees are expected to visit, reinforcing UP's

He claimed that the contribute Rs 3 lakh crore to the state's economy, Taking a swipe at the further accelerating its

**AGENCIES** 

NEW DELHI

Addressing mental health needs and reducing stigma is crucial for the well-being and development of adolescents, said psychology experts on Friday.

Adolescence is a crucial period of rapid physical, psychological, and social changes that can lead to significant stress. Various studies suggest that stress among adolescents is on the rise, posing a threat to their mental well-being.

This stress can also have an impact on an adoles- ety, depression, low self- event, held in the national cent's psychological wellbeing influenced by inherent biological factors, such as brain development and Psychiatry from AIIMS New adolescent mental health hormonal changes, and Delhi. behavioural factors like being bullied; coping skills, crisis requires a collective with essential life skills to and resilience.

leave scars far beyond visible and have long-lasting ience and create safer envi-health needs and reducing disorder," Murthy said, impacts on mental health. ronments for adolescents," Many who experience bul- he added. lying struggle with anxi-



esteem, and even thoughts capital, to shape policy of self-harm," said Prof. recommendations and Rajesh Sagar, Professor of intervention strategies for

"Addressing this hidden on equipping adolescents effort from researchers, enhance their resilience mental disorders. "The effects of bullying educators, and health professionals to foster resil-

He was speaking at an adolescents. India is home recognising it is crucial".

adolescents and for the better health of the nation it is imperative that we take all steps necessary to improve the psychological well-being of these future adults who would lead the country in the next decades," said Prof. Pallab Maulik, Director of Research at The George Institute for Global Health The event also highlight-

to more than 250 million

ed the healthy use of technology and social media emphasising their potential to provide mental health support while mitigating risks.

At another event in the national capital, Dr. Pratima Murthy, Director, NIMHANS stressing the need for increased awareness, and early diagnosis of

"One in ten people suffer from a diagnosable mental adding the condition "is health is important among like any other disorder, and

### India develops new drug to tackle burden of kala-azar, antibiotic to fight AMR

**AGENCIES** NEW DELHI

India has developed a novel antibiotic to fight antimicrobial resistance (AMR), as well as a new drug to tackle burden of kala-azar, also known as visceral leishmaniasis (VL) in the country, deliberated eminent scientists on Friday.

The experts were speaking on the second day of the 9th International Symposium on Current Trends in Drug Discovery Research at CSIR-Central Drug Research Institute in tion, in India. Lucknow. The event saw experts from different areas share their recent findings on drug resistance, Car T-cell therapy for cancer care, and parasitic and viral diseases.

University, Varanasi, maniasis (VL), starting country had initially aimed from its origin to eliminate kala-azar by



"Single-dose liposomal amphotericin B (LAmB) is a game changer in the management of visceral leishmaniasis," said

Prof. Shyam Sundar the National Centre for highlighted that AMR has from the Banaras Hindu Vector Borne Diseases rendered many existing meropenem-resistant Control (NCVBDC), India shared the journey of the has achieved its target of epidemic of visceral leish- eliminating kala-azar. The

2010, but the target was extended until 2023 due

to persistent challenges. Sundar noted that the elimination target for VL needs to be held in 2025 to obtain the WHO certi-According to data from fication. The experts also antibiotics ineffective, posing a major global health crisis.

Sachin S. Bhagwat from tions," he added.

the Wockhardt Research Center, Aurangabad, spoke on the discovery of a novel mechanism of an action-based beta-lactam plus beta-lactam enhancer combination -- WCK 5222 -- with comprehensive coverage of pan-drug resistant Gram-negatives.

Even as AMR infections are responsible for up to 8.85 lakh deaths annually, with an additional 9.6 lakh linked to sepsis, Bhagwat said the novel beta-lactam enhancer, Zidebactam, in combination with cefepime (WCK 5222), demonstrated potent activity against 35,000 global pan-drug-resistant Gram-negative isolates.

"WCK 5222 has saved over 45 lives under compassionate use and completed successful trials in severe documented infections and is expected to change the treatment paradigm for life-threat-To counter this, Dr. ening Gram-negative infec-

### Mpox Clade 1b more infectious, increases risk of miscarriage: Study

NEW DELHI

The latest variant of Mpox clade 1b that is causing infections across the globe, particularly in Africa, is not only more infectious but also raises a high risk of miscarriage, according to a study led by international research-

The study based on genetic analyses of clade 1b -- first detected in September 2023 in Kamituga, Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), showed that this variant has since humans.

In the study, published last year.



in the US since November, cent were men.

and even internationally miscarriage". Of the 670 suffered miscarriages.

-- Sweden and Thailand. patient samples analysed undergone mutations Separately, Clade Ib has in the study, 52.4 per cent making it more easily also spread to the US, infected with mpox were transmissible between causing 4 mpox infections women, while 47.6 per

in India. The event focused

"Addressing mental

stigma related to mental

against such stressors.

The majority of infec-The research team from tions were transmitted Medicine, the scientists six different countries through sexual contact, identified three new sub- including DRC, Denmark, but three cases were ing the virus. variants, one of which has the UK, and Spain, noted recorded among healthspread beyond Kamituga that the "new data may care personnel. While ing number of infections to other cities in the DRC, also suggest that clade seven patients died, eight are being reported among neighbouring countries, 1b entails a high risk of out of 14 pregnant women healthcare workers and

"For clade 1b, we see that one particular subvariant appears to have become better at transmitting between humans, and it has now been detected in several countries outside East Africa. In addition, the number of infected pregnant women who miscarry is high among those we have tested," said Professor Frank Moller Aarestrup from DTU National Food Institute in Denmark.

Originally, mpox was considered a zoonotic disease that primarily spread from animals to humans. However, in 2022, the world witnessed an outbreak primarily affecting men who have sex with men. The new clade 1b differs as both men and women are now contract-

In addition, an increaschildren, said the team.

### Study shows how gut microbiome raises risk of multiple sclerosis

NEW DELHI

Gut microbiome plays a significant role in the onset of multiple sclerosis (MS) -- an autoimmune disease that impacts the central nervous system, finds a study that may provide answers to why some people develop the condi-

The microbiome in the gut comprises trillions of bacteria and other microorganisms that live in our digestive tracts, and are connected to human health and disease. Researchers from Yale

University in the US idenpatients with MS. Com- going on with the hostknown as host immuno- investigator. Longbrake were newly diagnosed with Longbrake said. The find-

globulin A (IgA). teria were coated with IgA could predispose people to treat the disorder. These MS, but not others.



tified gut bacteria that in patients with MS sug- MS because they change had significantly different gests that there is perhaps the bugs that are in the levels of abundance in a fundamental disconnect gut." pared to healthy individu- microbe interactions," said in the Neurology Neuroals, MS patients also had a Erin Longbrake, Associate immunology and Neuro-clues into the mechanisms smaller number of bacte- Professor of neurology inflammation, the team underlying how this type ria coated in an antibody and the study's principal included 43 people who of drug works to treat MS,

For the study, published said that "theoretically, MS and had not started any ings might help explain "The fact that fewer bac-environmental risk factors sort of immune therapy to why some people develop

were compared with 42 healthy controls.

Analysis of their stool samples showed that species of Faecalibacterium were less abundant in patients with MS, while species of Monoglobus was more abundant in untreated MS patients.

Of the 43 people with MS, 19 gave the researchers an additional stool sample six months after starting B-cell depletion therapy -- a treatment that destroys immune cells that contribute to autoimmune diseases

The gut microbiomes of these patients more closely resembled the microbiomes of healthy controls than they had pretreatment, the researchers found.

"This gives us some

### Mamata defends Bengal's own health insurance scheme, terms it as 'unique'

**AGENCIES** 

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Thursday provided a 'detailed explanation' on why Swasthya Sathi, the state's own health insurance scheme, is unique in the country, adding that the greatest advantage of the scheme is its universal

"We provide health insurance under the Swasthya Sathi scheme without any restriction the country comes in the around nine crore people time, the Swasthya Sathi tion of a similar health Swasthya Sathi scheme. card is registered in the insurance scheme of the that family. These make tened Ayushman Bharat. the Swasthya Sathi scheme

Swasthya Sathi is unique in



ny of Narayana Health City of the developmental said. in the northern outskirts schemes of the state gov-

like the income limit of wake of all-round criticism in West Bengal are curthat family. At the same of allowing implementa- rently covered under the 14 new medical colleges

"My government has name of a lady member of Union government chris- brought revolution in the health sector of the state. Speaking on the occa- We provide treatment and 13, 392 new health cenunique in the country," the sion, the Chief Minister medicines totally free of Chief Minister said at the also claimed that, like cost. We are really proud foundation laying ceremo- Swasthya Sathi, most of that," the Chief Minister

Speaking on the occaof Kolkata on Thursday ernment are universal sion, Mamata Banerjee in nature because of the also read out details of newborn care units in the The Chief Minister's absence of income restric- the achievements in the state. The number is now explanations on why tions for the beneficiaries. health sector during the 71," the Chief Minister According to her, current Trinamool Con-

gress regime. "During our tenure, and hospitals and 42 new super-specialty hospitals had been set up in the state. There have been tres in the state. We have arranged for critical care units in all the districts which were not there previously. Earlier there were just six new special

### PMSSY strengthening healthcare infrastructure, fostering indigenous innovation: Jitendra Singh

AGENCIES

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

The Pradhan Mantri Swasthya Suraksha Yojana (PMSSY) is aimed at strengthening healthcare infrastructure and fostering indigenous innovation, Union Minister Dr Jitendra Singh said on Thursday.

The minister noted that strengthen India's healthcare infrastructure.

"The scheme is designed to provide quality medical care while promoting indigenous innovation in health-related R&D," he said while inaugurating the PMSSY-driven upgraded super-specialty Neurosurgery and Cardiovascular Surgery Building Block at the Sree Chitra Tirunal Institute for Medical Sci-(SCTIMST) in Thiruvananthapuram.

He emphasised that the



the PMSSY initiative is healthcare affordable, and approaches, Dr Singh part of a broader effort to accessible across sections of society.

> emerging as a centre of ligence in diagnostics, and excellence in both healthcare as well as research the institute, functioning under the Department of embodies the "whole-ofgovernment" approach.

He said the institute fosters collaboration between therapy. ences and Technology the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Science and Technology.

aimed at making quality traditional healthcare research," he stated.

underscored the importance of digital health Praising SCTIMST for initiatives, artificial intel-

genome-based therapies. The minister also highand development, Dr lighted India's achieve-Singh highlighted that ments in biotechnology, pointing out the success of the indigenous Covid-Science and Technology, 19 vaccine, the development of the HPV vaccine institutions and upgraded for cervical cancer, and breakthroughs in gene

"India has transitioned Stressing the need for healthcare, gaining global extend healthcare services PM Narendra Modi govern- integrating modern medi- recognition in bio-man- to remote regions, making ment's new initiatives are cal advancements with ufacturing and medical

He further emphasised the need for continued investments in healthcare R&D, ensuring that India remains at the forefront of medical advancements.

Dr Singh also encouraged scientists and medical professionals "to undertake collaborative research projects with global institutions to expand knowledge and expertise".

He stressed that while India has made remarkable progress in bridging the rural-urban divide in disease patterns, healthcare accessibility remains a challenge.

He reiterated the government's commitment to expanding medical services through new AIIMS medical colleges, ensuring affordable and high-quality treatment.

He also called for leverfrom being an importer aging telemedicine and to a leader in preventive mobile health units to quality healthcare accessible to all.

#### **Poland, Scotland & USA** join Egypt in Nations Cup 2 semi-finals

**AGENCIES** 

MUSCAT (OMAN), FEB 21

The final day of pool play at the FIH Hockey Men's Nations Cup 2 came to an end here with Egypt, Poland, Scotland and United States claiming the four semi-final spots.

It will be Egypt taking on United States in the first semi-final, while Scotland will take on Poland in an all-European second semifinal tie, with the matches to be played on Saturday.

Egypt opened the scoring in the first quarter doing what they do best, as they absorbed pressure from Poland, won the possession with a good tackle and a quick counter attack set Ziad Adel one-on-one against the keeper and he made no mistake in putting the African side into the lead on Thutsday.

#### **Hyd: Crimson Sports Academy to organise free** coaching session

HYDERABAD, FEB 21

Crimson Sports Academy, in collaboration

with Crickingdom, is organizing a specialized cricket coaching camp featuring Dav Whatmore, legendary Cricketer and an internationally acclaimed coach known for guiding international teams to success.

The two-day training program, scheduled for February 22 to 23, 2025, offers young cricketers a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to refine their skills under expert supervision, the academy said in a release here on Friday.

Whatmore, a former Australian international cricketer, is widely recognized for coaching Sri Lanka to its historic 1996 ICC Cricket World Cup victory.

## Watson backs Maxwell to inspire Australia to glory at Champions Trophy

**AGENCIES** 

LAHORE, FEB 21

Shane Watson has backed all-rounder Glenn Maxwell to dominate the ICC Men's Champions Trophy 2025 and lead Australia to yet another ODI title.

Maxwell might be 36 years old and boast more than 250 international caps across three formats, but his form in the Big Bash - where he was tion, insists they will be a one of two Players of the tough team to beat, espe-Series - has convinced cially if their explosive all-Watson his best cricket is still to come.

stan as the reigning world he said. champions in the 50-over format and sit second in recently, especially in the the men's ODI team rank-

from their last five ODI next two or three years matches - and key bowl- and I would be very surers Pat Cummins, Josh prised if he does not Hazlewood and Mitchell Starc all missing from the Trophy," Watson said. squad - questions have been raised about their innings against Afghaniability to claim the trophy in Pakistan.

two-time ICC Men's Cham- century, but he has strugpions Trophy winner and sadors for the 2025 edi- of his role in the team,"



rounder fires.

"The stand-out player Australia head to Paki- for me is Glenn Maxwell,"

"With what I have seen Big Bash, I believe he has some of his best cricket But with just one win in front of him across the dominate this Champions

"He had that incredible stan in the ICC Men's Cricket World Cup 2023, However, Watson, the where he scored a double gled to be consistent at

Watson said.

"However, it now just feels like it has all fallen into place for him, and pivotal part," he said.

very hard to beat, even if nity. their bowling squad is not quite as experienced as they might otherwise have been," Watson said.

Watson certainly knows what it takes to succeed in ning," he said. the Champions Trophy, an ICC media release said.

team that were crowned tall, he gets bounce and champions in 2006, hit- it is beautiful to see how ting 57 not out to help easy it he finds it to bowl them to an eight-wicket at the speeds he does. It's one of four Event Ambas- times. That's the nature win against West Indies in a great opportunity for

He then scored a century in both the semifinal and final in 2009 and hit the winning runs as Australia retained their trophy in South Africa.

The loss of Cummins, Hazlewood and Starc, who are missing due to a combination of injury and personal reasons, opens the door to a different crop of Australian bowlers, headed by Nathan Ellis and Spencer Johnson.

Aged 30 and 29 years old respectively, they have 10 ODI caps between that's with everything in them, with Sean Abbott his life, not just his crick- the most experienced et, so I think he will play a fast bowler with 26, and Watson is confident they "I think Australia will be can take their opportu-

> "You have to be at your very best in this event, with this format - you have to hit the ground sprinting, let alone run-

"Spencer Johnson doesn't swing it much The former all-rounder but the ball flies out of was part of the Australia his hand, he's quick, he's him," Watson said.

### Sachin, Yuvraj reunite as **Indian Masters take on Sri** Lanka in IML T20 opener



NAVI MUMBAI, FEB 21

In a spectacle set to reignite nostalgia and cricket- mats, he featured in just ing rivalries, Indian cricket legends Sachin Ten- India, making this return dulkar and Yuvraj Singh in the shortest format a will return to the field as special occasion. they lead India Masters in the opening clash of the tor to India's triumphs inaugural International Masters League (IML) T20 2025 against Sri Lanka Masters at DY Patil Sports excitement about don-Academy here on Satur-

100 centuries to his name, star allrounder said.

Tendulkar is regarded as one of the greatest batsmen of all time. Despite his dominance across forone T20 International for

Yuvraj, a key contribuin the 2011 ICC Cricket World Cup and 2007 T20 World Cup, expressed ning the Indian colours again. "India versus Sri The much-anticipated Lanka has always been encounter brings together an intense battle, and some of the finest cricket- this match will be no difers from the past, rekin- ferent. Playing alongside dling the storied rivalry legends, especially with between India and Sri Sachin Paaji leading us, is Lanka. With over 34,000 a thrilling experience. The international runs and fans are in for a treat," the

### Senior India women beat Jordan in Sharjah opener

**AGENCIES** 

SHARJAH (UAE), FEB 21

The India senior women's national team began their Pink Ladies Cup 2025 campaign with a 2-0 victory against Jordan at the Al Hamriya Sports Club Stadium here.

The Blue Tigresses led 1-0 at half-time.

Midfielder Naorem Pri-Manisha (54') scored, to give coach on Thursday.

began on a cautious note, get the rub of the green, as time to put a touch on it. the majority of their intent Jordan goalkeeper Alshalabe coming from the left flank misjudged the bounce of the Jordan come out with an iniwith Priyangka playing the ball and bundled it into the fiddle for Manisha to run at goal. the Jordan defence.

forward Roukayah Al Faraas she was played through behind India's last defender Sanju. The forward made Manisha, who sent her effort her way into the box, but over the cross-bar. was soon stopped by India

AASHIQ HUSSAIN

JAMMU, FEB 21 (HT)

Sports Council.

honor.

The 3-day 10th J&K UT

Handball Championship

began today here at Playing

field Shastri Nager Jammu

for senior men and women sections. The champion-

ship is being organized by

J&K Handball Association in

collaboration with J&K State

in the opening ceremony,

while Bajinder Pal Singh



The Blue Tigresses vards out. She did indeed

before she cut it back for

maintaining high physical

standards to achieve big.

Jammu was the chief guest bearers for organizing the and District Baramulla in

Divisional Sports officer districts of the UT are partic- in the men's section was

Jammu was the guest of ipating in the tournament. played between District

Arun Manhas Director He congratulated the J&K

Industries and commerce Handball Association's office

10th J&K UT Handball Championship begins

In his address, the chief secretary of the champion-

guest stressed upon the ship, Ashwani Kumar Raina

players to concentrate welcomed the guests, play-

on honing their skills and ers, officials, spectators and

championship. Around 300 which Baramulla won by

players from the different 16-15 goals. The 2nd match

Earlier, the organizing Jammu & District Udham-

media persons.

The first match in the

men's section was played

between District Poonch

yangka Devi (23') and winger goalkeeper Shreya Hooda. fine opportunity for Jordan Priyangka put the Indian towards the end of the first India their first win with nerves at ease in the 23rd half as she fizzed a cross Crispin Chettri as the head minute, when she bought from the left across the goal, the raffle from around 25 though none of her teammates could get there on

The second half saw tial burst of intent, but the India defence, marshalled by Minutes after the goal, captain Ngangbam Sweety However, it was Jordan India forward Sandhiya Devi and youngster Purnima Ranganathan capitalised Kumari weathered the shortrjeh, who had the first real a momentary confusion in lived storm before Manisha opportunity of the match the Jordan defensive lines to and Soumya Guguloth took make her way into the box, matters onto their swift feet. On the counter, the latter

played an accurate aerial through ball to Manisha, Bana Bitar produced a who scurried into the box keep their clean sheet.

before whipping a low cross in. Soumya had made her way into the box just in time to get a foot on the ball inside the six-yard box, but Alshalabe got a palm onto it in the nick of time. Manisha doubled India's

lead minutes short of the hour mark when she was played through on the left by Sandhiya. She sped past her marker and produced a deceptive shot with her left toe that whistled past the keeper at the near post.

India coach Chettri introduced a host of changes in the last few minutes of the game, choosing to hand Lisham Babina Devi her international debut. Karishma Purushottam Shirvoikar, another of the substitutes created the opportunity for a third goal when she cut the ball back from the goal line on the left for Priyangka, but a sliding Ayah Al-Majali thwarted her effort before Shreya made a point-blank save in injury time off Lana Feras' header to help India

pur in which District

Jammu defeated Udham-

pur by 27-22 goals. The 3rd

match in the men's section

was played between Dis-

trict Budgam and District

Ramban in which Budgam

defeated Ramban by 9-5

goals. In another match

of the women's section,

District Barmulla defeated

Among others who

were present on the occa-

sion were Ashwani Kumar

Raina President JKHA,

Rajesh Chandan General

Secretary JKHA, Sanjeev

JamwalTreasurer JKHA, and

Rajesh Kapoor Vice Presi-

dent JKHA.

Bandipora by 7-3 goals.

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