



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 commander-level 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 the flag

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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.

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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

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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.

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Specially abled person charred to death in Baramulla

■ HT News Network

Srinagar, Feb 21 (UNI) A 24-year-old 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 formalities.

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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-cum-commercial 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 and battled

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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 public

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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



time frame. To enhance the efficiency of forest land management, the Chief secretary instruct-

ed the officials to expedite the survey and demarcation of forest lands by installing boundary

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.

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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

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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,

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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 standard.

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



ernment intervention for protecting Kashmiri language and stressed on the

need for new recruitments to fill vacant positions of Kashmiri language educa-

tors. The union held a peaceful protest at Sher-e-Kashmir Park here to press for their demands.

Majid Ganaie, a union 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

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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 3.44 ft 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 evening.

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 the last 24 hours.



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 38.9 mm rainfall since last evening.

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EDITORIAL

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

Few 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

In 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.

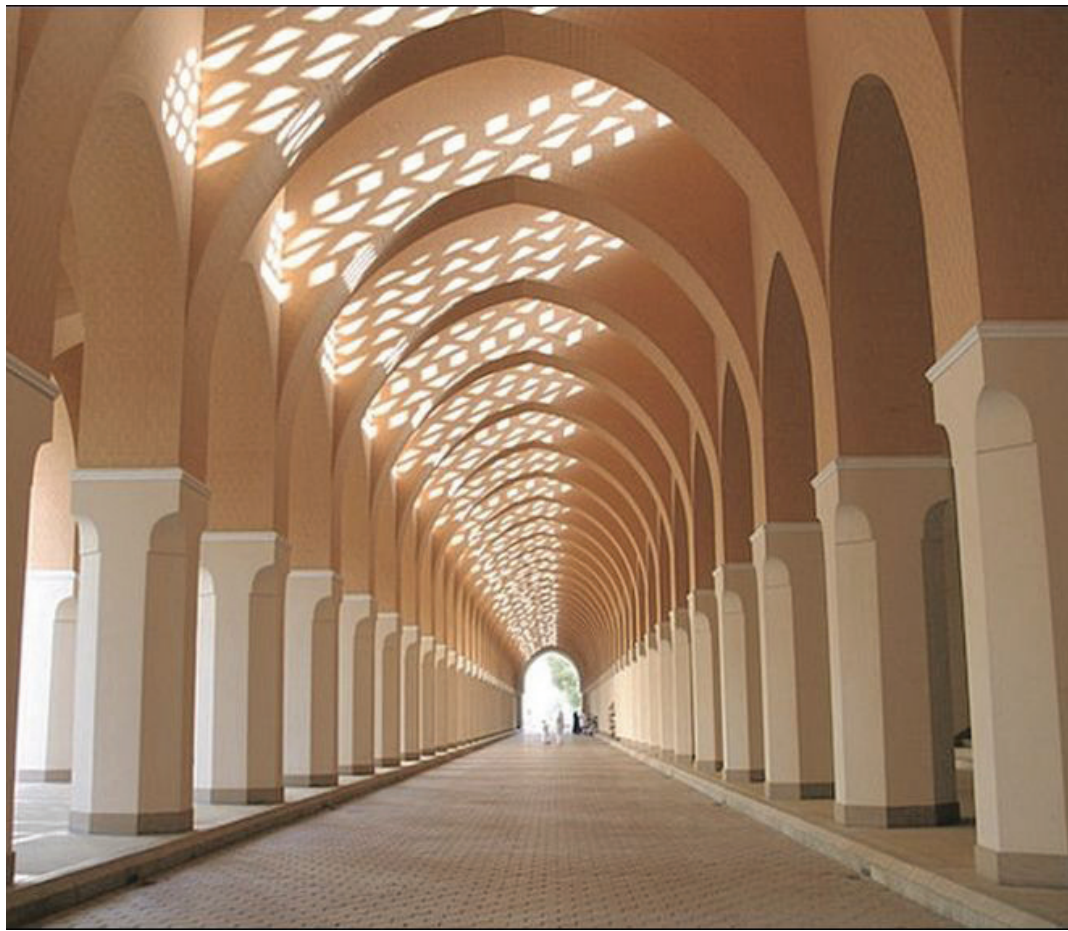
To begin with, it is essential to define the core principles of both Sufism and Salafism and to address the reasons behind the tension between them. Sufism, in its essence, is not a sect or an innovation but rather a spiritual path within Islam aimed at the purification of the soul and achieving closeness 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 Not Monotheists

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 as seeking the intercession of saints or venerating the graves of Sufi masters, involve invoking other than Allah, which contradicts the central tenet of Islamic monotheism (Tawhid).

What is Tawhid?

Tawhid, the concept of the 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, 'He is Allah, [Who is] One, Allah, the Eternal Refuge. He neither begets nor is born, nor is there to Him any equivalent.'" (Qur'an 112:1-4).



In both Sufism and Salafism, the belief in Tawhid is non-negotiable and absolute. However, the difference between the two often lies in how this belief is practically applied and understood, particularly regarding the veneration of saints or the inter-mediarities 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, nor do they believe that anyone has the power to intercede with Allah except through His will. This is the first point of distinction that needs to be made clear: True Sufism does not advocate polytheism or the worship of anyone other than Allah.

There are certain practices within Sufism, such as visiting the graves of righteous individuals (Awliya), but these acts are not meant to imply worship of the deceased. Instead, they are a means of showing respect for the piety and virtues of the righteous, seeking inspiration from their life and actions, and asking Allah to accept the intercession of these individuals by His will, not as a deity themselves. The Qur'an makes clear that seeking intercession from Allah's will is permissible, as long as it does not compromise the belief in Tawhid.

Allah says in the Qur'an: "And those who, when they commit an immorality or wrong themselves [by sin], remember Allah and seek forgiveness for their sins - and who can forgive sins except Allah?" (Qur'an 3:135)

The concept of intercession is explicitly discussed in both the Qur'an and Hadith, and the intercession of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) is a well-established belief among all Muslims. Therefore, 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 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 a deeper love and understanding of Allah, purifying one's heart from worldly distractions, and embodying the attributes of Allah in one's behaviour and actions.

The Qur'an itself encourages reflection, self-purification, and remembrance of Allah (dhikr), which are central practices in Sufism: "Those who have believed and whose hearts are assured by the remembrance of Allah. Unquestionably, by the remembrance of Allah hearts are assured." (Qur'an 13:28)

Moreover, the Hadiths also emphasize the importance of loving Allah and striving to be close to Him. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said: "Allah said: 'I am as My servant thinks I am. If he thinks well of Me, then he will find that; and if he thinks ill of Me, then he will find that.'" (Sahih Muslim)

In Sufism, love for Allah is

often described as a transformative 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 Divine.

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 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 is not concerned with the worship of anything other than Allah. Practices such as seeking blessings from a saint's tomb or asking for their intercession should not be conflated with the belief that these figures have independent powers apart from Allah. The Sufi path is meant to guide individuals toward a deeper, more profound connection with Allah, not to encourage any form of shirk or polytheism.

The key to understanding Sufism is to engage with its classical texts, the works of scholars, 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 tradition.

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.

Conclusion

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 from the true Sufi tradition.

Both Sufism and Salafism share the ultimate goal of achieving closeness to Allah, and we must come together to foster understanding and respect. I extend an open invitation to Salafis to explore the true essence of Sufism, a path of profound spirituality, love, and devotion, rooted deeply in the teachings of the Qur'an and the Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). Together, let us walk the path of truth, unity, and monotheism, in service to Allah alone.

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Should the parole pleas of heinous criminals not be heard?



DR. SATYAWAN SAURABH

Parole is based on reform and reintegration, but when it is used for serious crimes, it creates ethical and legal dilemmas. The principles of human rights and rehabilitation must be taken into account, even though justice demands punishment and prevention. An important step in the criminal justice system is parole. It is a form of relief to help prisoners reintegrate into society. It is nothing more than a tool for the prisoner's social recovery. However, in recent years, there has been a signif-

icant shift in this idea as the rich and powerful class has started using parole to avoid spending time in prison. On the other hand, millions of other prisoners, whose requests for parole are ignored, lack the resources to take advantage of the process or are wrongly denied benefits on flimsy grounds because they are poor and powerless. Since our prisons are literally overcrowded with non-violent offenders, parole allows incarcerated people to serve the remainder of their sentence with their loved ones while law enforcement agencies keep a close eye on them. This saves millions in taxes every day and is a great system for the entire society. Very rarely do you hear of a violent offender who is released on parole and then commits another violent crime.

Most violent criminals

serve at least 85% of their sentence in any case. But there is no doubt that parole can weaken the sense of justice of victims and their families. There must be strong deterrence against heinous crimes such as terrorism, rape, and murder. To maintain deterrence, the convicts 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 their repeated crimes, the convicts in the 2013 Shakti Mills gang rape case were not granted parole. Political influence can erode faith in justice, resulting in the granting of parole that is not warranted. Parole in the T. P. Chandrasekharan murder case was reportedly granted due to political pressure. Because of the brutality and pre-planning involved

in these crimes, reform is challenging. The 2018 Kathua rape case made it clear that harsh punishment devoid of mercy is needed. According to Indian courts, people released on parole are allowed to exercise their rights to procreation and marriage under Article 21 of the Constitution. However, since the right to marriage is not recognized by law, granting parole on this basis compromises the right to equality for gay prisoners.

To guarantee equality and inclusiveness for all prisoners, courts can link parole to the more general right to intimacy under Article 21. A key component of the Nelson Mandela Rules (2015), the UN Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners, is reform. Parole is a right, not a privilege, as Justice Krishna Iyer has emphasized in several judg-

ments. Rather than being a general sanction, parole should be granted based on behavioral assessment. Rehabilitation of prisoners serving life sentences resulted in a reduction in recidivism in Maharashtra in 2023. Parole requests are already assessed by courts on merit, thereby guaranteeing safety and justice. In State of Haryana v. Jai Singh (2003), the Supreme Court affirmed that parole should be granted according to impartial standards. Article 21 (the right to life with dignity) can be violated by life imprisonment without the possibility of parole if reform is demonstrated. According to Sriharan (2015), it is unconstitutional to completely deny someone parole. Countries such as Norway have reduced recidivism rates, even for those convicted of heinous crimes, by empha-

sizing gradual reintegration. Norway has one of the lowest recidivism rates in the world thanks to its model of rehabilitative justice.

As is commonly known, the effectiveness of parole administration has been hampered by strong administrative and political pressure. The goals of the program are routinely compromised, and many inappropriate offenders are paroled as a direct result. With regard to parole, a well-defined judicial policy is essential, and executive actions taken should be reviewed by the courts. It is time for our lawmakers to make the necessary changes to reform our criminal justice system. These changes should include creating strong guidelines to implement the supervised release system in a progressive manner to improve the qual-

ity of life of prisoners, creating consistent parole laws to prove that it is an effective tool for rehabilitation, and establishing checks and balances to prevent abuse of parole in India. The government should be concerned about overcrowding in prisons, and they should address this immediately. Justice, deterrence, and rehabilitation should all be considered when limiting parole to heinous crimes. Public safety and moral fairness can be guaranteed without extensive restrictions by using a transparent, merit-based approach with strict judicial oversight. Parole is something that cannot be ignored, as is obvious.

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Are 14 Years Enough For Aijaz Sheikh’s Heinous Crimes?

NEWSHEENA MUSHTAQ

The sentencing of Aijaz Sheikh, the most infamous child rapist in Kashmir has provoked massive outrage and disbelief. Sheikh has been sentenced to just 14 years of imprisonment for the appalling crimes inflicted by this man over the last three and a half decades on innocent children, using the trusted roles of a teacher, an imam, and a faith healer. In all honesty, this man should receive much more punishment from the justice system for deeds of such magnitude, an estimated 5,000 victims subjected to sexual violence against minors, forced enactment of these crimes by minors, and even filming these egregious acts.

Sheikh manipulated his position to gain access to innumerable innocent victims through three decades of brutality perpetrated against them. The children who looked upon him for healing and guidance were done the worst forms of evil by him. He not only committed these heinous acts but also compelled children to abuse one another while he watched and sometimes even filmed the abuse. Such trauma is a scar that remains on a person for life. And what he has collected for his payout in terms of punishment does little to cement the wounds he has created. Therefore, one must ask is 14 years of imprisonment for being a monster considered even remotely close to justice?

The legal system defines the edicts of justice. It protects the helpless and has a suffocated future criminal. However, this ruling does give a morbid suggestion even the worst offenders those with systematic destruction of thousands of lives, may one day walk free. In many countries, serial child rapists either face life imprisonment without parole or, in some cases, even capital punishment. India’s own Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act has a provision for life imprisonment or even the death penalty in extreme cases. If Sheikh’s crimes do not fall into the category of extreme, then 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. For over three decades, this

man operated quite freely, protected by the trust and respect that came with his so-called noble professions. How many suspicions were ignored? How many children cried out for help and were silenced? This is not a failure in the courts. It is a total failure of the system that allowed him to continue unchecked for so long.

Justice is supposed to be more than a prison term, for it has to bring closure to victims and security to society. A punishment of 14 years is far from it. The survivors will spend their entire lives running from the torture of his abuses but that, according to this verdict, could be a free man in a little over a decade. The agony these crimes have inflicted will not expire after the term of 14 years, so is this the way that punishment should be? Is this how little a child’s life is worth?

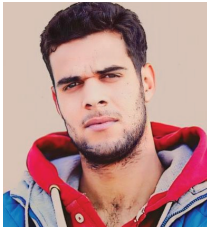
This case ought to open the minds of the courts of justice on the relevance of the offence. A really determined prosecution must ensure that Sheikh never walks the streets again, with an appeal for tougher sentences. Society as well should demand stricter laws and create stronger walls preventing predators from hiding in trusted positions. Schools, religious institutions, and families should be eyes wide open and report abuse cases more readily. Child safety should never be claimed as a given. Covering it shouldn’t be given decades.

What Aijaz Sheikh has done is beyond the pale of forgiveness, beyond redemption, and certainly beyond a mere 14-year sentence. He has built a life of inflicting trauma on innocent young children and stripping them of their sense of trust, dignity, and safety. The fight for justice does not end with this verdict. If we truly hold value in the lives of children, life in prison without parole must be the least penalty for such a monstrous predator. Anything less is a betrayal of, literally, every child harmed.

Let this be the moment where society says unequivocally to the world, “Child predators will not find the mercy of this society again, nor will they ever be let out.”

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



NAWAZZ IBN AHAD

As the adage goes, “Education is the passport to the future, for tomorrow belongs to those who prepare for it today.” With the PM SHRI school, our village is now poised to claim its rightful place in the sun, armed with the power of knowledge and the promise of a better tomorrow. Education is the cornerstone of progress, yet our village has long struggled with inadequate educational infrastructure. With only one middle school available, our children have been compelled to travel to adjacent villages in pursuit of knowledge. The advent of the PM SHRI school heralds a plethora of advantages for the students and the community at large. The PM SHRI school emerges as a timely intervention, promising to bridge this gap and provide a robust foundation for the intellectual and social growth

of our children. The recent sanctioning of a PM SHRI (Prime Minister Schools for Rising India) school for our village, however, brings a much-needed ray of hope. This landmark development is not just a school; it is a beacon of transformation, an opportunity to bridge the long-standing educational gap that has hindered our community’s growth. The PM SHRI initiative is not just about constructing another school building; it is about creating model institutions equipped with 21st-century learning tools, smart classrooms, and an inclusive environment that fosters innovation and leadership. With an emphasis on experiential learning, skill development, and environmental consciousness, this is not just the dawn of a new era in education; it is the dawn of a new era for our villages. This will serve as a powerful tool for change, capable of unlocking doors to a better future. For our children, this school is a gateway to endless possibilities. For our villages, this is a source of dignity and progress. This school has the potential to nurture future-ready students who can contribute meaningfully to society. For our village, this school represents

more than just an educational institution. It is a catalyst for social reform, empowerment, and economic upliftment. Educated individuals lead to empowered families, which in turn build progressive communities. With the right infrastructure and resources, we can transform our village into a center of academic excellence rather than a forgotten dot on the map. A Milestone in Educational Development The PM 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 areas. This centrally-sponsored scheme focuses on modern teaching methods, smart classrooms, and holistic development of students. The school will provide quality education with well-equipped classrooms, trained teachers, and digital learning tools, ensuring that our children receive the education they deserve within their own village. For years, our village has been at a disadvantage due to the lack of a proper school beyond the middle level. Despite being a central hub for nearly ten surrounding villages, we have

lagged behind in educational infrastructure. This has compelled our students to undertake long and difficult journeys to other villages for schooling—an inconvenience that has often led to dropouts, lower literacy rates, and limited career opportunities. But with the establishment of the PM SHRI School, this struggle is set to change. Impact on Local Students and the Community The PM SHRI School will significantly reduce the burden on students and parents by bringing education closer to home. No longer will our children have to travel long distances for basic schooling. It will not only ensure access to quality education but also promote gender equality, as many families hesitate to send their daughters to distant schools. Additionally, this school will act as a center of learning for students from neighboring villages, further strengthening our village’s role as an educational hub. It will open doors to better career prospects, skill development, and social progress for our youth. It is often said that education is the most powerful tool for change, and our community is in dire need of this change. The absence of

proper educational facilities has kept us behind in many aspects of development. But now, with the PM SHRI School, we have a golden opportunity to empower our children, strengthen our society, and pave the way for a brighter future. While this is a significant achievement, it is just the beginning. To ensure the success of this initiative, we must actively support the establishment and functioning of the school, encourage students to enroll, and work collectively to make this institution a model of excellence. The PM SHRI School is more than just a school—it is a symbol of hope, progress, and a better future. It represents a new chapter in the history of our village, one where education becomes the driving force for change. Let us embrace this opportunity with open arms and work towards building a brighter future for our children and our community. While the PM SHRI school is a monumental achievement, its success depends on collective responsibility. The government has done its part by sanctioning the institution; now, it is up to us—the villagers, the parents, and the local authorities—to ensure its

effective implementation. We must advocate for qualified teachers, proper infrastructure, and a well-structured curriculum. We must work towards fostering an environment where education is valued not just in principle but in practice. As we embrace this new chapter, let us not forget the long struggle that brought us here. The sanctioning of the PM SHRI school is an opportunity to rewrite the narrative of our village. It is time to move from lamenting our educational shortcomings to celebrating our potential. Education is not merely a privilege—it is a right, and finally, it is coming home. Let us pledge to nurture this institution with the dedication and vision it deserves so that the generations to come may not just dream of a better future but be equipped to build it. As the saying goes, “Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.” With the PM SHRI school, our village is now one step closer to wielding that weapon and transforming its destiny. Let us embrace this change and work towards making quality education accessible to every child in our village.

Budget powers India’s green transition with clean tech push

N VAMSI REDDY

While FM Nirmala Sitharaman’s budget is tailored to drive consumption, propel long-term growth, and reinforce India’s commitment to a greener world, proposals to power India’s journey towards sustainability and net zero through various energy sector reforms, policies, and incentives stand out as they provide for a transformative shift in India’s energy landscape. India’s demand for power will continue to increase.

The country has set an ambitious target of achieving net zero by 2070, a tall order. The power sector accounts for nearly one-third of India’s total greenhouse gas emissions. While a country like India can’t eliminate its reliance

on coal-fired power with one stroke, transformative reforms in the power sector couldn’t and must not wait.

The path to carbon neutrality has to be paved with renewables. The Budget has provided the much-needed push to nuclear energy with the target of achieving 100 GW capacity by 2047 as part of India’s long-term energy transition strategy and achieving long-term economic and environmental goals.

The government wants to position nuclear energy as a significant pillar of the energy mix. This aligns with India’s broader objectives of a Viksit Bharat that will be less reliant on fossil fuels. The proposal to launch a Nuclear Energy Mission will promote domestic capabilities, private sector participation, and enhanced deploy-



ment of advanced nuclear technologies such as small modular reactors.

With an outlay of Rs 20,000 crore for promoting research and development of SMRs, the government targets developing at least five indigenously designed and operational SMRs by 2033. The government will also bring in necessary amendments to the Atomic Energy Act and Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage Act to facilitate the Mission and encourage private sector participation in nuclear power

projects. This is a great initiative! The Budget proposal to incentivise electricity reforms and augmentation of inter-state transmission capacity by states will advance power distribution companies’ financial health and capacity. Upon meeting the reforms initiated under the revamped distribution system scheme, states can borrow an additional 0.5 per cent of their gross domestic product over and above what they get under the FRBM Act.

This will significantly

improve the efficiency of the power sector. These reform measures are part of the government’s plans to support clean technology. The government also intends to promote clean tech manufacturing to improve domestic value addition and build a local ecosystem for solar cells, electrolyzers, wind turbines, high-voltage transmission equipment, and grid-scale batteries, among other technologies. The Budget marks a transformative step for India’s renewable energy sector. The government’s commitment to the ‘Make in India’ initiative and the new clean tech manufacturing policy will augment the development of solar PV cells, batteries, and other sustainable technologies locally in India.

These moves will contribute to the nation’s

clean energy journey while fostering sustainable economic growth. The full BCD exemption of the scrap of lithium-ion batteries, Lead, Zinc, and 12 more critical minerals will help boost battery manufacturing in India and promote more jobs for our youth.

By reducing the BCD on solar panels by half to 20 per cent, the FM has provided animal spirits to the wind energy sector, which would further reduce the price of the panels and reduce India’s imports by facilitating domestic production.

The increased allocation for solar power to promote rooftop solar projects is positive for solar module manufacturers and will boost RE capacity.

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

A perilous challenge for India’s soft diplomacy

SANTHOSH MATHEW

In the volatile heart of Yemen’s capital, Sanaa, an Indian national, Nimisha Priya, faces dire circumstances, accused of killing a Yemeni citizen. The charges are serious, but the true gravity of the situation lies in the potential consequences. Nimisha’s case is not just about the allegation; it is a call for India to step forward decisively to protect one of its own.

The environment in Houthi-controlled Sanaa is precarious, with little hope of a fair trial or a peaceful resolution. This situation, which has escalated into an international diplomatic challenge, demands India’s immediate intervention. Yemen has been mired in conflict for years, with the Houthi rebels now in control of

the capital. With power dynamics in constant flux and the justice system fractured, foreign nationals, especially from countries like India, are particularly vulnerable.

It is feared that Nimisha Priya, if left without diplomatic intervention, could face the harshest of outcomes, including arbitrary punishment or worse, in an environment where blood money—a custom rooted in Yemeni culture—may become a mode of resolution. This practice, deeply embedded in parts of the country, contradicts the ideals of modern justice and the humanitarian values upheld by India.

The Indian government has already taken significant steps to address the crisis. India’s diplomatic response to this case has been commendable, with swift actions to ensure that

the matter does not escalate further. Notably, Iran’s Foreign Minister, Abbas Araghchi, raised the issue with the Houthi envoy, showing a growing recognition of the case’s importance on the regional diplomatic stage. This cooperation reflects the urgency of India’s intervention and highlights the potential for multilateral diplomacy to resolve the issue without resorting to traditional tribal customs like blood money.

India’s foreign policy has long been defined by its commitment to human rights and justice. In this case, the Indian government must continue to stand firm on these principles, ensuring that Nimisha’s life is not negotiated for a price. Blood money, in particular, must not be allowed to govern the fate of an innocent individual.

India’s insistence on this point will not only safeguard her but also reaffirm India’s role as a leading advocate for justice and human dignity in the global arena. More crucially, Nimisha Priya’s situation places her life at risk due to the volatile political and security environment.

The Houthi-controlled justice system may not provide the due process or fairness one would expect in a modern, civilized society.

Foreign nationals are often treated with disdain, and Nimisha could fall victim to a miscarriage of justice. To prevent this, India must leverage all diplomatic channels, including informal backdoor negotiations and Track Two diplomacy, which have proven effective in navigating complex international conflicts. India has a long history

of maintaining close ties with the Middle East, and it is through these alliances that India can garner support for its position. Countries like Iran, which shares strong historical ties with India, have shown willingness to mediate in this case, as evidenced by Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi’s intervention.

Track Two diplomacy is a critical tool in this regard. Informal dialogue through trusted intermediaries can often achieve results when official channels are bogged down by bureaucracy and political sensitivities. India’s ability to operate through both formal and informal diplomatic avenues offers it a unique advantage in resolving this crisis and ensuring that Nimisha receives a fair and just resolution. The Indian government’s actions to address this case

are a testament to its commitment to protecting its citizens abroad.

This case also highlights the importance of India’s soft power diplomacy. Indian nurses, who play a vital role in providing healthcare across the Middle East, are viewed not only as healthcare providers but also as cultural ambassadors of India.

The protection of Nimisha Priya, a nurse working abroad, is thus more than just a personal concern. It reflects India’s broader commitment to safeguarding its citizens and maintaining their trust in the government’s ability to protect them.

The Indian government’s proactive measures, including diplomatic outreach and coordination with international partners, underscore the country’s growing stature as a

global player.

As India’s diplomatic outreach continues to develop, the importance of soft power—exemplified by its citizens abroad—becomes increasingly evident. Nimisha’s case is not merely an isolated incident; it represents an opportunity for India to assert its influence and diplomatic capability on the global stage. The government’s efforts to safeguard Nimisha Priya should be lauded.

By engaging with regional powers, leveraging backchannel diplomacy, and ensuring that international standards of justice are upheld, India demonstrates its growing leadership in global affairs. Through such strategic actions, India can also affirm its position as a nation that champions human rights and justice for all its citizens, regardless

less of where they are in the world.

In conclusion, Nimisha Priya’s situation presents a serious challenge, but it is also an opportunity for India to reaffirm its values and demonstrate its diplomatic maturity.

By taking swift and comprehensive action, India will not only save her life but also reinforce its reputation as a responsible global leader, protecting its citizens and upholding the ideals of peace, justice, and human dignity. leader in human rights and justice. India must continue to press forward, ensuring that Nimisha Priya’s case is resolved with the fairness and respect she deserves, signalling a victory for Indian diplomacy on the world stage.

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

Kathua administration hosts Mega Job Fair

1156 aspirants get placement letters

■ HT News Network

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.

This mega employment drive was made possible



through the dedicated efforts of the District Administration

Kathua in collaboration with the Local Industrial Association.

Deputy Commissioner Dr.

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

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) Harvinder Singh today chaired a meeting to discuss the arrangements for the holy month of Ramzan.

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



hours.

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 government-approved rates.

The DC emphasized the impor-

ance 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.

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.

The event, organised in

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 Jyee, Vice President (In Proto Vice Chancellor of the International University

School of Medicine - IUSOM) and Chairman of the Afro-Eurasian Chamber of Commerce, Education Development, and Employment (ACCEDE). Prof. Ravi Jyee, a distinguished expert in disaster management, shared valuable insights on proactive preparedness, risk mitigation strategies, and effective response frameworks. The event provided an engaging platform for attendees to discuss contemporary disaster management challenges and explore solutions for enhancing coordination among stakeholders. Various officers put their que-

ries to clear the doubts which were replied by experts.

Pertinent to mention that the district falls under a seismic zone V and also 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 on brainstorming innovative ideas. The District Administration emphasized its commitment to fostering community awareness and preparedness to minimize the impact of disasters.

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)

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

PUBLIC NOTICE

The Registrar Births and Deaths (Block Development Officer Wagoora)/ chokedar has submitted case file pertaining to Birth of **BMHAT 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 occurred at SDH KREERI for issuance of delay order. In this connection . if anyone have any objection to the issuance of delay order of Birth certificate shall present his/her claim this office within 07 days, after that no objection shall be entertained.

Executive Magistrate
1st Class KREERI

GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU & KASHMIR

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

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

PUBLIC NOTICE

The Registrar Births and Deaths (Block Development Officer Wagoora)/ chokedar has submitted case file pertaining to Birth of **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 occurred at SDH KREERI for issuance of delay order. In this connection . if anyone have any objection to the issuance of delay order of Birth certificate shall present his/her claim this office within 07 days, after that no objection shall be entertained.

Executive Magistrate
1st Class KREERI

GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU & KASHMIR

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

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

PUBLIC NOTICE

The Registrar Births and Deaths (Block Development Officer Wagoora)/ chokedar has submitted case file pertaining to Birth of **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 occurred at SDH KREERI for issuance of delay order. In this connection . if anyone have any objection to the issuance of delay order of Birth certificate shall present his/her claim this office within 07 days, after that no objection shall be entertained.

Executive Magistrate
1st Class KREERI

DC reviews progress of development projects, sanitation initiatives in Doda

■ HT News Network

DODA, FEBRUARY 21: Deputy Commissioner 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 panchayats. The meeting was attended by District Officers, Block Development Officers (BDOs), and Junior Assistant Executive

Engineers (JAEs). Reviewing key initiatives such as the construction of Community Compost Pits, Community 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

Panchayati Raj Institution (PRI) Grants and other schemes. Officials were directed to address challenges promptly and enhance coordination to improve public amenities. Reviewing key initiatives such as the construction of Community Compost Pits, Community 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.

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

For and on behalf of the Lt. Governor, Union Territory, J&K, bids are invited (In double cover system) from the interested bidders/Registered Contractors/Firms with J&K State/Central Govt., CPWD for the following work:-

S.No.	Name Work/Contract	of Reserve Bid (In Rs.)	Earnest Money Deposit (EMD) @ 10 % (in Rs.)	Cost of Tender Documents in shape of Demand Draft (Non-Refundable) (In Rs.)	Validity of Contract
1	2	3	4	5	6
01.	Outsourcing of entry ticketing System of Rani Bagh Park Anantnag	4,74,600.00	47,460.00	1,000/-	One (1) year from the date of award of contract

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 www.dofkashmir.com / www.jktenders.gov.in 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.

اطلاع عام

ہر خاص عام کو اطلاع دی جاتی ہے کہ ادھار کاڈ زیر نمبر 6930 2267 2254 مین بیٹی کا نام مصباح انراج ہوئی ہے جبکہ اصل نام مطابق سکول رکاڈ مصباح انراج ہے اب اس کی دستگی کرانی مطلوب ہے کسی کو کوئی عذر ہو تو وہ سات یوم کے اندر اندر دفتر ہزا مین پیش کرے بعد از معاد کوئی عذر قبول نہیں ہوگا۔
المستہر

گلزار احمد شیخ والد مصباح گلزار
ساکن ماگرہ پور اچھ بل اننت ناگ کشمیر

ازدفتر نائب تحصیلدار کریری

درخواست مخاطب سالک غلام حسین بخار ولد عبدل رحمان بخار ساکنہ بھنچہ ہرہ ہرہ وصول OBC سرٹیفیکٹ تحت ایس اراو 126/ 294 بجتن دختہ اسراکن

اشتہار بمراد آگاہی

معاملہ مندرجہ عنوان الصدمیں درخواست سالک غلام بخار ولد عبدل رحمان بخار ساکنہ بھنچہ ہرہ ہرہ دفنہ ذمیں زیرکاروانی سے اس بابت رپورٹ پٹواری سے عیاں ہوتا ہے سال کا نمبر (05) افراد پر مشتمل ہے کنڈی سالانہ آمدنی 37000

1. غلام حسین بخار ولد عبدل رحمان بخار سربرہ 58 سال ترخان
2. قلیہ بیگم زوجہ 56 سال گھریلو کام
3. ... مدر احمد بخار پسر 28 سال ترخان
4. ... بیہاد بانو بہو 26 سال گھریلو کام
5. ... اسراکن دختہ 19 سال زیر تعلیم

اسکے علاوہ کوئی بھی افراد میں بتلایا گیا ہے اباز اتمام عام خاص و عام کو زیریہ اشتہار مطالع کیا جاتا ہے کہ اگر کسی کو سرٹیفیکٹ نکالنے میں کوئی عذر یا اعتراض ہو تو وہ اپنا عذر یا اعتراض ساتھ دن کے اندر اندر پیش کریں معاذ کرنے کے بعد کوئی عذر یا اعتراض قابل قبول میں ہوگا

نائب تحصیلدار کریری

GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU & KASHMIR

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

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

PUBLIC NOTICE

The Registrar Births and Deaths (Block Development Officer Wagoora)/ chokedar has submitted case file pertaining to Birth of **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 occurred at SDH KREERI for issuance of delay order. In this connection . if anyone have any objection to the issuance of delay order of Birth certificate shall present his/her claim this office within 07 days, after that no objection shall be entertained.

Executive Magistrate
1st Class KREERI

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

■ **Farooq Rather**

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 DH Pora 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; Assis-

tant 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-District Hospital (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 Fateh Khan, Dr Asmat IC mobile eye camp and Chairman Civil Society Magam, Haji Mohammad Ibrahim Mir; besides other 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

laparoscope and digital X-ray machine to the hospital, in addition to upgrading the existing hospital infrastructure and utilizing the old hospital complex as a trauma hospital.

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

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 women.

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 enforcement, community vigilance, and early education to dismantle the culture of harassment.

The workshop witnessed thought-provoking discussions led by esteemed Inspector Qaisar Qureshi & Inspector Monisa, along with the dedicated efforts of organizing fellow Par-

veiz Kawoosa.

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**

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

■ **HT News Network**

ANANTNAG, FEBRUARY 21: Additional Deputy Commissioner Anantnag Fayaz Ahmad Bandy, 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

and Mis-branded qualities and operation of high risk food businesses under unhygienic conditions.

The Additional Deputy Commissioner after considering the complaints filed 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 Ramzan said.

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).

Speaker LA reviews progress on new Legislative Assembly Complex

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

HT News Network

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 at Jammu.

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; SE R&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 decisions.

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 initiated.

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

JAMMU, 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



future. 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. 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-

tionality.

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 education.

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 Malik on 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 open-

ing 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 public services.

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, Udhampur.

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 floriculture

business 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.

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 Mukht 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

health officials and line departments to expedite the 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 stakeholders. 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 Mukht 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 holders who have worked for more



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) Pradyot Gupta 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 death, chronic diseases, permanent

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 general public.

Agriculture department discusses strategy for Promotion of Lavender Cultivation in Jammu Division

■ 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; CAO S M G Singh; CAO Ram Gopal Sharma; CAO Harbans Singh; Dr. Lalit Mohan Professor & Head, Division of Forest Production & Utilization, Faculty of Horti-



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 Sarastwati Vandana.

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.

Padam Shri 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 regional languages 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 Padam Shri 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 stakeholders.

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 area-wise 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 block-level 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 community.

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 Mukht 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 Socio-economic 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, Junior Category), Burhan Sheikh, Shafkat Rasool, Ali, Farhan, Mueen 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 ambience.



Telangana CM inaugurates women-run Petrol Bunk in Narayanpet

AGENCIES

NARAYANPET (TELANGANA), FEB 21 (UND)

Telangana Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy inaugurated a petrol bunk set up by Zilla Mahila Samakhyha (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 self-help 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 Telangana.

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.

Six of family returning from Maha Kumbh killed in road accident

AGENCIES

ARAH, FEB 21 (UND)

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, reportedly 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

AGENCIES

PHAGWARA, FEB 21 (UND)

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

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 on the spot.

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.

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

AGENCIES

NEW DELHI, FEB 21 (UND)

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 life."

Addressing the event, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said, "The School of Ultimate Leadership will play a vital role in India's development. This institute is not just named 'SOUL', but is destined to become the very heart of India's social life."

He added that today every Indian is working day and night for a 'developed India' of the 21st century.

"In such a situation, even in a country of 140 crore people, we need the best leadership in every sector, every vertical, and every aspect of life," he said.

Talking about the importance of SOUL, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said, "Any country that aims to progress needs not only natural resources but also human resources. In the 21st cen-



tury, we need resources that can drive innovation and channel skills effectively."

"Skills are required in every sector, and leadership development is no exception—it demands new abilities. We must scientifically accelerate leadership development, and SOUL will play a vital role in this transformation," he added.

Calling India "emerging as a global powerhouse," he said this momentum is accelerating across every field. To sustain and amplify this growth, we need world-class leaders."

"SOUL institutions can be a game-changer in this transformation. International institutions like these are not just a choice

but a necessity," Prime Minister noted.

Bhutan Prime Minister Tshering Tobgay, who is attending the two-day conclave in New Delhi, said while addressing the event, "I want to make it clear from the very beginning that I have no lessons about leadership, I am hardly qualified for 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 helps me. Prime Minister, my elder brother, you have put India on the path of progress in just 10 years with your wisdom, courage and compassionate leadership."

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

AGENCIES

NEW DELHI, FEB 21 (UND)

The Supreme Court on Friday issued a notice on a petition filed by YouTuber Ashish Chanchlani, seeking to quash or transfer an FIR registered against him in Guwahati for allegedly promoting obscenity in an online show.

A bench comprising Justice Surya Kant and Justice N Kotiswar Singh tagged Chanchlani's petition along with that of pod-

caster Ranveer Allahbadia, the primary accused in the case for his controversial remarks on the YouTube show India's Got Latent.

During the hearing, the Bench noted that Chanchlani had been granted bail by the Gauhati High Court and that the FIRs stemmed from the same show, where Allahbadia had already been granted interim relief earlier in the week.

Significantly, on February 18, the Supreme Court



stayed Allahbadia's arrest while condemning his remarks as "vulgar," stating that he had a "dirty mind, which put society to shame."

The Apex Court directed that he must fully cooperate with the investigation without legal representation inside the police station.

Chanchlani, in his writ petition, has challenged the FIR lodged at the Cyber Police Station, Guwahati Crime Branch, Assam, seeking either its quashing or transfer to Mumbai, where a similar case was registered earlier. His legal counsel argued that he made no objectionable

remarks during the show and that the allegations primarily targeted his co-accused.

The FIR, filed by Guwahati Police on February 10, invokes provisions of the Bhartiya Nyay Sanhita (BNS), the Information Technology Act, the Cinematograph Act, and the Indecent Representation of Women (Prohibition) Act. The Supreme Court is expected to hear the matter further in the coming weeks.

UP poised to become trillion dollar economy by 2029: Yogi

AGENCIES

LUCKNOW, FEB 21 (UND)

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Friday said that Uttar Pradesh is rapidly progressing toward becoming India's largest economy and will achieve the target of becoming a 1 trillion dollar economy by 2029.

Replying to a question raised by Samajwadi Party (SP) MLA Ragini Sonkar, the CM said that the state's economy has grown from Rs 12 lakh crore to a projected Rs 27.5 lakh crore by the end of the current fiscal 2024-25 while reaffirming the goal of achieving a 1 trillion dollar economy by 2029.

Criticising the opposition, he said that those who refuse to acknowledge India's progress as a developed nation also question UP's economic growth. He said that India has emerged as a major global economy, which may not sit well with those driven by personal agendas.

Yogi said, "However, the reality is that India now holds the fifth-largest economy globally and is poised to become a 5 trillion dollar economy by

2027."

He said that to give impetus to economic growth his government has identified 10 key sectors, including industrial development, agriculture, social security, urban development, revenue collection, education, health, tourism, and the service sector. "Each sector undergoes a monthly review by the senior officers, ministers concerned with which I myself conduct a quarterly assessment," he said.

The CM said that investment proposals of Rs 40 lakh crore were received during the Global Investors Summit 2023, out of which proposals of Rs 15 lakh crore have been brought on the ground. "Of this several industries have started production. This investment is expected to generate employment opportunities for 60 lakh youth," he said.

He said that this is the same state whose Credit Deposit (CD) ratio was 44 percent, which has now exceeded 60 percent, indicating that the capital of Uttar Pradesh is being reinvested within the state. "The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) report highlights UP as the leading state in



banking transactions over the last five-year plan, with Jan Dhan accounts playing 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.

He said, "UP now leads 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 migrant workers linked them to the MSME sector, resulting in employment for over two crore people."

He said, "Marking a sig-

nificant boost for young entrepreneurs, the government launched the 'CM Yuva Udyam Yojana' on the UP's Foundation Day on January 24. Under this scheme, bank loans up to Rs five lakh are provided at zero interest in the first phase, with the second phase offering loans up to Rs 10 lakh. The scheme has received an overwhelming response, with over 96 lakh applications submitted so far."

Highlighting the transformation in UP's agricultural sector, the CM said that before 2017, the condition of farmers was dire, but today, they are thriving. "Unlike in the past, where distress led to farmer suicides, they now receive one and a half times the price of their produce."

He said that farmers

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

AGENCIES

JOHANNESBURG/NEW DELHI, FEB 21 (UND)

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 Ministers' Meeting in Johannesburg on Thursday, the EAM said that meetings like the current one "have provided an opportunity for our interaction even when our ties were going through a difficult phase".

"We should also recognize that in a polarized global situation, our two countries have worked hard to preserve and protect the G20 as an institution."

"This in itself testifies to the importance of international cooperation."

"Since our last meeting in Rio during the G20 Summit in November 2024, there have been some notable developments. Our NSA and For-



eign Secretary have visited China and there have been discussions about various aspects of our relationship.

"These have included management of peace and tranquility in the border areas as well as other dimensions of our ties."

"I am glad today to have a further exchange of views."

"India and China are members of the G20, SCO and BRICS. There are also regional and global issues of mutual interest, where an exchange of perspectives will be to our mutual benefit."

In November 2024, EAM Jaishankar had met Wang Yi on the sidelines of the G20 Summit in Rio de Janeiro, during which he had noted that the implementation of the October 21 agreement between both nations on disengagement at the LAC had proceeded as planned.

In December, Nation-

ality Security Advisor Ajit Doval, who is India's Special Representative (SR) on the boundary question, had met with Wang Yi for the 23rd meeting of the SRs in Beijing on December 18.

As agreed during the meeting of PM Narendra Modi and Chinese President Xi Jinping in Kazan on October 23, the two SRs held discussions on the management of peace and tranquility in the border areas and to explore a fair, reasonable and mutually acceptable solution to the boundary question.

Wang Yi is Member of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee and Minister of Foreign Affairs of China.

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

Fresh snowfall on higher reaches of Himachal

AGENCIES

SHIMLA, FEB 21 (UND)

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 Khadralla (15 cm), also experienced fresh snow.

those who doubt UP's ability to achieve a 1 trillion dollar economy in five years are driven by negativity, while the government remains steadfast in its vision.

He accused the previous Samajwadi Party government of turning UP into a 'BIMARU' state and pushing it to the sixth or seventh position in India's economic rankings. "However, due to the double-engine government's efforts in the last eight years, UP has now emerged as India's second-largest economy," he said.

The CM expressed confidence 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, revealing that in 2023, the state welcomed 65 crore tourists. "With the Maha Kumbh, more than 60 crore devotees are expected to visit, reinforcing UP's global recognition," he said.

He claimed that the Maha Kumbh alone will contribute Rs 3 lakh crore to the state's economy, further accelerating its growth.

Addressing mental health needs, reducing stigma key for adolescent wellbeing: Experts

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 adolescent's psychological well-being influenced by inherent biological factors, such as brain development and hormonal changes, and behavioural factors like being bullied; coping skills, and resilience.

"The effects of bullying leave scars far beyond visible and have long-lasting impacts on mental health. Many who experience bullying struggle with anxi-



to more than 250 million 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 India.

The event also highlighted 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 mental disorders.

"One in ten people suffer from a diagnosable mental disorder," Murthy said, adding the condition "is like any other disorder, and recognising it is crucial".

ety, depression, low self-esteem, and even thoughts of self-harm," said Prof. Rajesh Sagar, Professor of Psychiatry from AIIMS New Delhi.

"Addressing this hidden crisis requires a collective effort from researchers, educators, and health professionals to foster resilience and create safer environments for adolescents," he added.

He was speaking at an

event, held in the national capital, to shape policy recommendations and intervention strategies for adolescent mental health in India. The event focused on equipping adolescents with essential life skills to enhance their resilience against such stressors.

"Addressing mental health needs and reducing stigma related to mental health is important among adolescents. India is home

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 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.

Prof. Shyam Sundar from the Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi, shared the journey of the epidemic of visceral leishmaniasis (VL), starting from its origin to elimina-



tion, in India.

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

According to data from the National Centre for Vector Borne Diseases Control (NCVBDC), India has achieved its target of eliminating kala-azar. The country had initially aimed to eliminate kala-azar by

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 certification. The experts also highlighted that AMR has rendered many existing antibiotics ineffective, posing a major global health crisis.

To counter this, Dr. Sachin S. Bhagwat from

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, Zidebac-tam, 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 meropenem-resistant infections and is expected to change the treatment paradigm for life-threatening Gram-negative infections," he added.

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

AGENCIES
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 researchers.

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 undergone mutations making it more easily transmissible between humans.

In the study, published in the journal Nature Medicine, the scientists identified three new sub-variants, one of which has spread beyond Kamituga to other cities in the DRC, neighbouring countries, and even internationally



-- Sweden and Thailand. Separately, Clade 1b has also spread to the US, causing 4 mpox infections in the US since November, last year.

The research team from six different countries including DRC, Denmark, the UK, and Spain, noted that the "new data may also suggest that clade 1b entails a high risk of miscarriage". Of the 670

patient samples analysed in the study, 52.4 per cent infected with mpox were women, while 47.6 per cent were men.

The majority of infections were transmitted through sexual contact, but three cases were recorded among healthcare personnel. While seven patients died, eight out of 14 pregnant women suffered miscarriages.

"For clade 1b, we see that one particular sub-variant 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 contracting the virus.

In addition, an increasing number of infections are being reported among healthcare workers and children, said the team.

Study shows how gut microbiome raises risk of multiple sclerosis

AGENCIES
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 condition.

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 identified gut bacteria that had significantly different levels of abundance in patients with MS. Compared to healthy individuals, MS patients also had a smaller number of bacteria coated in an antibody known as host immunoglobulin A (IgA).

"The fact that fewer bacteria were coated with IgA



in patients with MS suggests that there is perhaps a fundamental disconnect going on with the host-microbe interactions," said Erin Longbrake, Associate Professor of neurology and the study's principal investigator. Longbrake said that "theoretically, environmental risk factors could predispose people to

MS because they change the bugs that are in the gut."

For the study, published in the Neurology Neuroimmunology and Neuroinflammation, the team included 43 people who were newly diagnosed with MS and had not started any sort of immune therapy to treat the disorder. These

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 pre-treatment, the researchers found.

"This gives us some clues into the mechanisms underlying how this type of drug works to treat MS," Longbrake said. The findings might help explain why some people develop MS, but not others.

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

AGENCIES
KOLKATA

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 nature.

"We provide health insurance under the Swasthya Sathi scheme without any restriction like the income limit of that family. At the same time, the Swasthya Sathi card is registered in the name of a lady member of that family. These make the Swasthya Sathi scheme unique in the country," the Chief Minister said at the foundation laying ceremony of Narayana Health City in the northern outskirts of Kolkata on Thursday afternoon.

The Chief Minister's explanations on why Swasthya Sathi is unique in



the country comes in the wake of all-round criticism of allowing implementation of a similar health insurance scheme of the Union government christened Ayushman Bharat.

Speaking on the occasion, the Chief Minister also claimed that, like Swasthya Sathi, most of the developmental schemes of the state government are universal in nature because of the absence of income restrictions for the beneficiaries.

According to her,

around nine crore people in West Bengal are currently covered under the Swasthya Sathi scheme.

"My government has brought revolution in the health sector of the state. We provide treatment and medicines totally free of cost. We are really proud of that," the Chief Minister said.

Speaking on the occasion, Mamata Banerjee also read out details of the achievements in the health sector during the current Trinamool Con-

gress regime.

"During our tenure, 14 new medical colleges and hospitals and 42 new super-specialty hospitals had been set up in the state. There have been 13, 392 new health centres 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 newborn care units in the state. The number is now 71," the Chief Minister claimed.

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 the PMSSY initiative is part of a broader effort to 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 Sciences and Technology (SCTIMST) in Thiruvananthapuram.

He emphasised that the PM Narendra Modi government's new initiatives are aimed at making quality



healthcare affordable, and accessible across sections of society.

Praising SCTIMST for emerging as a centre of excellence in both healthcare as well as research and development, Dr Singh highlighted that the institute, functioning under the Department of Science and Technology, embodies the "whole-of-government" approach.

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

Stressing the need for integrating modern medical advancements with traditional healthcare

approaches, Dr Singh underscored the importance of digital health initiatives, artificial intelligence in diagnostics, and genome-based therapies.

The minister also highlighted India's achievements in biotechnology, pointing out the success of the indigenous Covid-19 vaccine, the development of the HPV vaccine for cervical cancer, and breakthroughs in gene therapy.

"India has transitioned from being an importer to a leader in preventive healthcare, gaining global recognition in bio-manufacturing and medical research," he stated.

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 institutions and upgraded medical colleges, ensuring affordable and high-quality treatment.

He also called for leveraging telemedicine and mobile health units to extend healthcare services to remote regions, making 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 semi-final 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 Thursday.

Hyd: Crimson Sports Academy to organise free coaching session

AGENCIES

HYDERABAD, FEB 21

Crimson Sports Academy, in collaboration with Crickindom, 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 one of two Players of the Series - has convinced Watson his best cricket is still to come.

Australia head to Pakistan as the reigning world champions in the 50-over format and sit second in the men's ODI team rankings.

But with just one win from their last five ODI matches - and key bowlers Pat Cummins, Josh Hazlewood and Mitchell Starc all missing from the squad - questions have been raised about their ability to claim the trophy in Pakistan.

However, Watson, the two-time ICC Men's Champions Trophy winner and one of four Event Ambassadors for the 2025 edi-



tion, insists they will be a tough team to beat, especially if their explosive all-rounder fires.

"The stand-out player for me is Glenn Maxwell," he said.

"With what I have seen recently, especially in the Big Bash, I believe he has some of his best cricket in front of him across the next two or three years and I would be very surprised if he does not dominate this Champions Trophy," Watson said.

"He had that incredible innings against Afghanistan in the ICC Men's Cricket World Cup 2023, where he scored a double century, but he has struggled to be consistent at times. That's the nature of his role in the team,"

Watson said.

"However, it now just feels like it has all fallen into place for him, and that's with everything in his life, not just his cricket, so I think he will play a pivotal part," he said.

"I think Australia will be very hard to beat, even if 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 the Champions Trophy, an ICC media release said.

The former all-rounder was part of the Australia team that were crowned champions in 2006, hitting 57 not out to help them to an eight-wicket win against West Indies in the final.

He then scored a century in both the semi-final 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 them, with Sean Abbott the most experienced fast bowler with 26, and Watson is confident they can take their opportunity.

"You have to be at your very best in this event, with this format - you have to hit the ground sprinting, let alone running," he said.

"Spencer Johnson doesn't swing it much but the ball flies out of his hand, he's quick, he's tall, he gets bounce and it is beautiful to see how easy it he finds it to bowl at the speeds he does. It's a great opportunity for him," Watson said.

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



AGENCIES

NAVI MUMBAI, FEB 21

In a spectacle set to reignite nostalgia and cricketing rivalries, Indian cricket legends Sachin Tendulkar and Yuvraj Singh will return to the field as they lead India Masters in the opening clash of the inaugural International Masters League (IML) T20 2025 against Sri Lanka Masters at DY Patil Sports Academy here on Saturday.

The much-anticipated encounter brings together some of the finest cricketers from the past, rekindling the storied rivalry between India and Sri Lanka. With over 34,000 international runs and 100 centuries to his name,

Tendulkar is regarded as one of the greatest batsmen of all time. Despite his dominance across formats, he featured in just one T20 International for India, making this return in the shortest format a special occasion.

Yuvraj, a key contributor to India's triumphs in the 2011 ICC Cricket World Cup and 2007 T20 World Cup, expressed excitement about donning the Indian colours again. "India versus Sri Lanka has always been an intense battle, and this match will be no different. Playing alongside legends, especially with Sachin Paaji leading us, is a thrilling experience. The fans are in for a treat," the star allrounder said.

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 Priyangka Devi (23') and winger Manisha (54') scored, to give India their first win with Crispin Chettri as the head coach on Thursday.

The Blue Tigresses began on a cautious note, the majority of their intent coming from the left flank with Priyangka playing the fiddle for Manisha to run at the Jordan defence.

However, it was Jordan forward Roukayah Al Farajeh, who had the first real opportunity of the match as she was played through behind India's last defender Sanju. The forward made her way into the box, but was soon stopped by India



goalkeeper Shreya Hooda.

Priyangka put the Indian nerves at ease in the 23rd minute, when she bought the raffle from around 25 yards out. She did indeed get the rub of the green, as Jordan goalkeeper Alshalabe misjudged the bounce of the ball and bundled it into the goal.

Minutes after the goal, India forward Sandhiya Ranganathan capitalised a momentary confusion in the Jordan defensive lines to make her way into the box, before she cut it back for Manisha, who sent her effort over the cross-bar.

Bana Bitar produced a

fine opportunity for Jordan towards the end of the first half as she fizzed a cross from the left across the goal, though none of her teammates could get there on time to put a touch on it.

The second half saw Jordan come out with an initial burst of intent, but the India defence, marshalled by captain Ngangbam Sweetey Devi and youngster Purnima Kumari weathered the short-lived storm before Manisha and Soumya Guguloth took matters onto their swift feet.

On the counter, the latter played an accurate aerial through ball to Manisha, who scurried into the box

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 keep their clean sheet.

10th J&K UT Handball Championship begins

AASHIQ HUSSAIN

JAMMU, FEB 21 (HT)

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 championship is being organized by J&K Handball Association in collaboration with J&K State Sports Council.

Arun Manhas Director Industries and commerce Jammu was the chief guest in the opening ceremony, while Bajinder Pal Singh Divisional Sports officer Jammu was the guest of honor.



In his address, the chief guest stressed upon the players to concentrate on honing their skills and maintaining high physical standards to achieve big. He congratulated the J&K Handball Association's office bearers for organizing the championship. Around 300 players from the different districts of the UT are participating in the tournament.

Earlier, the organizing

secretary of the championship, Ashwani Kumar Raina welcomed the guests, players, officials, spectators and media persons.

The first match in the men's section was played between District Poonch and District Baramulla in which Baramulla won by 16-15 goals. The 2nd match in the men's section was played between District Jammu & District Udhampur

in which District Jammu defeated Udhampur by 27-22 goals. The 3rd match in the men's section was played between District Budgam and District Ramban in which Budgam defeated Ramban by 9-5 goals. In another match of the women's section, District Barmulla defeated Bandipora by 7-3 goals.

Among others who were present on the occasion were Ashwani Kumar Raina President JKHA, Rajesh Chandan General Secretary JKHA, Sanjeev Jamwal Treasurer JKHA, and Rajesh Kapoor Vice President JKHA.

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