



Rule of law established in J&K: LG Manoj Sinha

- Women empowerment key focus
- Girls bag 70% gold medals in universities

■ HT News Network

JAMMU, FEBRUARY 27: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Thursday said that the rule of law has been firmly established in Jammu and Kashmir, paving the way for progress and development.

Addressing a function here the Lieutenant Governor, according to the news agency—, stressed on the need for collective efforts to transform J&K into an educational, research, and technological hub of the country: “We have to try to transform J&K, and for that, everyone must contribute. We have achieved many successes, with the rule of



law being given paramount importance. An attempt has been made to ensure that J&K is governed strictly according to legal principles,” he said.

Highlighting the region's rapid development, the Lieutenant Governor revealed that 92,000 proj-

ects were completed in the last financial year.

He said that J&K has emerged as a leading technological Union Territory, with maximum online services available to the public.

During his address, the Lieutenant Governor

TURN ON.....PAGE 02

Assembly in UT is hybrid system: CM Omar Abdullah

- Situation in JK not organic, but driven out of fear
- Half statehood to J&K against idea of two systems in one country

■ HT NEWS NETWORK/KNO

Srinagar, Feb 27: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Thursday said that having an assembly in the Union Territory is a hybrid system and that the country should either have only states or only UTs.

He also said that the situation in Jammu and Kashmir is not organic, but driven out of fear.

In a programme, ‘Ummadu Ka Jammu Kashmir’ by ‘THE RED MIKE DIALOGUES With Omar Abdullah’, the Chief Minister as per the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), said that he wishes to have a J&K with peace, and communal harmony.

About the statehood restoration with half powers, he said, “There is no model in India where you have a full state without all powers. So unless you are envisaging a situation where J&K would be treated uniquely, I don't see how this will work, if you plan to treat JK uniquely



then please explain what August 5, 2019 was about. If I am not mistaken, all of those were saying that JK has been brought at par with the rest of the country.”

“The whole idea was that you can't have two systems in one country, if it is one country with one system then how can you now propose a new system just of JK. You have to treat us at par.” “If what is happening today in JK today is organic

TURN ON.....PAGE 02

J&K has lost its ‘pride and honour’, says Deputy CM

Omar inherited broken state to govern; statehood must be restored soon

■ HT News Network/UNI



Srinagar, Feb 27 (UNI) Deputy Chief Minister Surinder Chaudhary on Thursday said that Jammu and Kashmir has lost its pride and honour due to the revocation of its special status and statehood.

Talking to reporters here, Chaudhary, according to the news agency—said, “This is a democratically elected government, and it has been hardly 3.5 months since we assumed power. Chief

TURN ON.....PAGE 02

Article 370 revocation ended terrorism in J&K, says Union Minister Athawale

■ HT News Network/UNI



Jammu, Feb 27 Stating that the revocation of Article 370 and bifurcation of Jammu and Kashmir into two union territories had a positive impact on the region, Union Minister of State for Social Justice and Empowerment Ramdas Athawale on Thursday said that move ended terrorism in the region. Athawale, according to the news agency—, while talking to reporters, here said, “Scrapping of the Article 370 led to significant improvements. It ended terrorism and led to an increase in development,

TURN ON.....PAGE 02

All-Party Meeting On Budget Session

Rather asks members to ensure smooth functioning of House, hold govt accountable

■ HT News Network

JAMMU, FEBRUARY 27: Speaker, Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly, Advocate Abdul Rahim Rather, today urged the representatives of all political parties and independent Legislators for cooperation during ensuing Budget session to ensure productivity of the house.

Chairing an All Party Meeting (APM) ahead of the Budget session, scheduled to commence

TURN ON.....PAGE 02



Drug, suicide cases declined due to strong police action: SSP Bla Gurinderpal Singh

■ HT News Network

Gulmarg, Feb 27: Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Baramulla, Gurinderpal Singh on Thursday said the number of drug-related and suicide cases had declined this year compared to the previous year. He said the reduction was due to the stringent action taken by the police against

drug dealers and suppliers.

Speaking at an inaugural function of a ski competition, SSP Singh, as per the news agency—urged people to come forward, assuring that the police were always ready to support those seeking help.

He said drug addicts should be seen as victims who need help, while the real criminals are the drug mafias

TURN ON.....PAGE 02

Amid inclement weather, Govt likely to extend winter vacation till Mar 5

Edu minister to hold important meeting today

■ HT News Network

Srinagar, Feb 27 Amid inclement weather, the government is likely to extend winter vacation for schools till March 5 in the Kashmir division. Speaking exclu-



sively with the news agency Education Minister, Sakina Itoo said that the government will hold a meeting in this regard tomorrow.

“Keeping in view the prevailing weather conditions, we are going to hold a meeting tomorrow regarding

TURN ON.....PAGE 02

Mehbooba slams attempt by BJP to influence J&K Assembly Speaker

■ HT News Network/UNI

Srinagar, Feb 27 (UNI) Former Chief Minister and Peoples Democratic Party Chief Mehbooba Mufti on Thursday criticized BJP legislator for “attempting to influence” the J&K Assembly Speaker on what should or shouldn't be permitted in the House.

Mehbooba was reacting to the Leader of Opposition (LoP) statement that no “anti-national or unconstitutional” bill would be allowed to be tabled in the Budget Session of the Jammu and Kashmir Assembly scheduled to begin on March 3. “Our stand is clear that we will not allow any unconstitutional



TURN ON.....PAGE 02

J&K Local Bodies dedicated OBC Commission submits its final report, recommendations

■ HT News Network

JAMMU, FEBRUARY 27: In a significant development, the Jammu and Kashmir Local Bodies Dedicated Backward Classes Commission submitted its final recommendations to the Chief Secretary, J&K, Atal Dulloo, on Thursday.

The report, presented in presence of Secretary RDD&PR, Mohammad Aijaz Asad, is expect-



ed to highlight the objectives laid down at the time of its constitution. Director Panchayati Raj, J&K,

Sham Lal; Secretary in OBC Commission, Reyaz Ahmad Shah; Deputy Secretary in OBC Commission, Mohinder Sharma and others were also present on the occasion.

The Commission, headed by Justice (Retired) Janak Raj Kotwal, a former Judge of Jammu and Kashmir High Court, with former IAS Officer, RK Bhagat and former Dean of SKUAST Jammu, Dr. Mohinder Singh Badwal as members, was

TURN ON.....PAGE 02

Terror funding: CIK sleuths arrest terrorist from Delhi in covert operation

■ HT News Network

Srinagar, Feb 27 (UNI) Jammu and Kashmir Police's Counter Intelligence Kashmir (CIK) arrested a terrorist from Delhi who was allegedly involved in terror funding and having links with terrorists of proscribed terrorist organization sitting across the Line of Control, police said on Thursday

They said Parvez Ahmad Khan alias PK alias Sheikh Tajamul Islam alias Khalid of Farooq Colony, Bemina, Srinagar was arrested in a covert operation in Delhi with assistance of CID cell Delhi and Delhi Police.

TURN ON.....PAGE 02

Mirwaiz bereaved, father-in-law passes away

■ HT News Network

Srinagar, Feb 27: Dr Ghulam Sibtain Masoodi, renowned social figure, physician, father-in-law of Mirwaiz Umar Farooq, and also the brother of former Member Parliament from South Kashmir and senior NC leader Justice (R) Hasnain Masoodi passed away here on Wednesday night.

He was laid to rest at his ancestral graveyard at Khrew, Pampore on Thursday afternoon.

Dr Masoodi's demise was widely condoled by political leaders, prominent religious scholars and civil society members.

NC president Farooq Abdullah, chief minister Omar Abdullah, former

TURN ON.....PAGE 02

Day 3: J&K continues to receive snow, rain

MeT predicts more, man dies as boulder hits vehicle, avalanche damages 2 houses in Gurez, Major roads, highways closed

■ HT News Network/UNI

Srinagar, Feb 27 (UNI) Srinagar and other parts of the Kashmir Valley received a fresh snowfall, bringing down the temperature and disrupting normal life on Thursday, officials said.

Srinagar, the summer capital of Jammu and Kashmir, and its adjoining areas received light snowfall this evening after moderate rains, bringing down the



temperature and disrupting normal activities.

The mountains surrounding iconic Dal Lake in Srinagar turned white with the fresh snowfall today. The precipitation continued till late in the evening.

The inclement weather persisted for the third consecutive day in the Kashmir Valley, with higher reaches experiencing yet another heavy spell of snowfall, while the plains have been lashed by moderate to heavy rains over

the past 24 hours.

Most of the higher reaches of Kashmir received moderate snowfall, with isolated areas also witnessing heavy accumulation, while rainfall was recorded in most plains of the valley.

The Meteorological Centre Srinagar office said the ski resort of Gulmarg received the highest accumulation of 20.0 cm of snow.

Apart from Gulmarg, snowfall was also reported from higher

TURN ON.....PAGE 02



CONTINUE FROM FRONT PAGE.....

POLICE

Police said the arrested terrorist was involved in case registered in Police Station CIK which relates to providing of logistic support to terrorists of proscribed terrorist organization(s) active in UT of J&K by variety of means including providing/passing on funds to them for carrying terrorist activities in UT of J&K.

“This money is being routed through various means from across LoC then pushed into India through their couriers which included arrested accused Parvez Ahmad Kha who was arrested in Delhi by a investigating team of CIK in collaboration with CID cell Delhi and Delhi Police,” the police said.

The operation was planed at CIK Headquarters few days ago and the accused terrorist was on surveillance (both technical and physical), they added.

Police said the accused was hiding and evading arrest and was planning to abscond from the present location.

The arrest was made in compliance to a “warrant of arrest” issued by competent court at Srinagar.

Police said the arrested terrorist will be produced before competent court at Srinagar after his transit from Delhi to Srinagar for which transit remand has been obtained from Delhi Court.

“Further arrests in the case are expected,” police added.

LG

stressed the importance of ensuring equal rights and opportunities for women in Jammu and Kashmir. He called for greater efforts in empowering women beyond welfare measures, ensuring their active participation in the region's development. “We must ensure that women enjoy the same rights as men. Over the past four and a half years, every effort has been made to guarantee women's rights and integrate them into the development process. A new team of women entrepreneurs must be created, and their numbers should match those of men,” he asserted.

The Lieutenant Governor congratulated the awardees and called upon them to work towards transforming the youth into enlightened citizens. He observed that, in the current era of unprecedented technological advancement, where AI is reshaping our work environment, we need to prepare human resource capable of driving the change.

The Lieutenant Governor said, “In our journey of Viksit J&K, we need support of valiant soldiers, leaders from social sectors, farmers, entrepreneurs, youth and women. We need to identify those sections of the population who have got left behind due to discriminatory laws and keep working for their upliftment.

We need to build a J&K where the rural and urban divide is completely bridged. A J&K where there is social equity and which runs on the principles of rule of law and equal opportunity. A J&K where tourism, handicraft, agriculture, horticulture, industry and service sector works together”.

The Lieutenant Governor reiterated that the J&K Administration is working for inclusive growth with sincerity and commitment.

“I can proudly say that in the past four and half years we have ensured development of social sectors to complement our economic growth to achieve the ultimate goal of social equity,” the Lieutenant Governor said.

He highlighted that, under the guidance of Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, the government has implemented a framework of policies and programmes for the benefit of the underprivileged and those discriminated and the saturation of benefits should be ensured.

“I also want great personalities and intelligentsia to act as a monitoring system for the proper implementation of programmes and policies designed for the upliftment of the weaker sections of society.

This goal can be achieved with the collective effort of the administration, civil society organizations like Women Club Meri Pehchan and the leaders like you. Your active participation in fact, holds the key to the success of all the projects for socio-economic change,” the Lieutenant Governor said.

CM

nothing like it, if it is driven out of fear then you have a problem, because you can only control a situation out of fear for a limited time, if it is organic then it will remain forever. But I will hazard that the forces and the people who you talk to in JK, even they don't believe it is organic, they wouldn't have closed Jama Masjid for Mirwaiz to offer his father-in-law's funeral prayers,” he said.

“Law and order doesn't break out when normalcy is organic, but it happens when it is forced. It is not organic normalcy in JK but it is forced and this is because you are trying to run JK through the second model you are proposing where governance would not have a role in law and order and security. I will hazard that there are limitations to the second model that you are proposing because you will never be able to carry the population as the partners for normalcy unless the elected government is part of the paradigm,” the Chief Minister said.

About his statement on Article 370 judgement,

he said that he has made it clear that the top court has already given the decision in favour of Article 370 in the past and now that the verdict has been given against it, then there are expectations for a favourable decision again.

He added that the removal of Article 370 has not made any visible changes in Jammu and Kashmir, adding that the situation is not normal as the terrorist incidents are still there.

He added that he is not disagreeing with the statistics as during his tenure, the trend of militancy related incidents, recruitment and other related things had also gone down in the past. “The progress has not been made due to the removal of Article 370. It is because the Centre took measures which J&K government would have never taken,” he said, adding, “Removal of Article 370 has had no impact on improvement on the security situations. That is because of the territory under President's rule and it is how you handled the security forces.”

“The officers I am working with have not been appointed by me. They will listen to those who have the right to remove or appoint them,” he said when asked whether the officers are listening to the elected government. “There should be either UTs or States only. If it is UT then there should be no assembly, don't make the hybrid system,” he said.

He also said that he does not have a nature to make excuses, they (officers) are not doing and listening to us.

He also said that Amit Shah is the Union Home Minister and meeting him was nothing unusual. “When I met Chidmabaram and other HMs in the past, nobody talked about it, you cannot work without the support of the Centre.”

He also said that the Centre has not kept any way for the confrontation, they are supporting the elected government in any way, they have promised the restoration of statehood restoration, “but if they change their stance, then we will also change our approach.”

About the Prime Minister Narendra Modi nominating him for his obesity campaign, he said had there been a chief minister, who has completed a half marathon then he would have stated that there was injustice with him. “Obesity is not a political problem. It is a social problem,” he said.

About INDIA bloc, he said, “We have been fighting against each other very much. INDIA bloc should decide its role. If it is for the Lok Sabha polls only then we should wind it up and form it again in the next parliamentary polls. But there is a need to fight joint assembly polls too. In J&K we barely managed to save the alliance and till the end, it was not showing any signs of going for the polls jointly. When we were discussing the seat sharing with Congress, we were not ready to reduce our numbers as we were sure that we would manage to secure this number of seats.”

He also said that the Congress has willingly decided to stay away from the cabinet as JKPC Chief had told him during the swearing-in ceremony that they will not be a part of the government till the statehood is restored. However, he said that a space in the cabinet has been kept for them.

Asked whether the INDIA bloc is dead, he said, “No, we still have a sizable number in parliament. Whether we are able to deliver or not is a different question, but this government depends on alliance. Therefore, as long as the INDIA bloc is able to deliver, it is not dead.”

About the restoration of statehood, he said that he is not waiting for five years, but expecting the restoration for statehood this year only. The discussion is going on, he said. He said they have plan B and plan C. “But, I am not going to sit here and say we will do this and that if we don't get statehood by this date. I am assuming that the government has said that it is committed to restore it, SC has also asked for the complete statehood restoration a year ago. I think as soon as possible and at earliest qualify for some time in the next few months.

Omar also reacted to the query over the expectations of the people on his first budget, saying that from this budget, whatever they have promised, they will start delivering it.

He also said that the government led by him in Jammu and Kashmir has started providing employment to the people and said that they will discuss the number of employment in detail and that they will raise this issue during the time of elections. “I have provided appointment letters to the doctors and panchayat secretaries,” he said when asked about the PM providing job letters to youth.

He also reacted to the question on direct train services and people's apprehensions, highlighting the public grievances from Jammu in this regard, who feared that the Katra station would neglect Jammu.

DYCM

Minister Omar Abdullah inherited a broken state to govern. However, with the blessings of the people, no one will be able to defame our government. The results will be visible soon. By next year in February, we will be in a different position.”

Expressing optimism about the restoration of statehood, he reminded the Centre of its commitment. “The Centre had promised that statehood would be restored, and I hope Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah will keep their promise.”

“We are unable to deliver fully in the current Union Territory setup, and we believe that

statehood must be restored soon,” he said.

He also raised serious concerns over the increasing drug menace in J&K, claiming it to be a deliberate conspiracy to destroy youth. “Drugs are being peddled into J&K as part of a conspiracy to ruin our younger generation.”

Chaudhary reiterated his party's stance against all forms of addiction, including liquor consumption—

SPEAKER

on March 3, 2025, the Speaker underscored the need for dialogue, coordination and consensus building to facilitate smooth legislative proceedings.

Leader of Opposition (LoP), Sunil Sharma and Surjeet Singh Slathia, represented BJP; Mubarik Gul represented National Conference; Ghulam Ahmad Mir, represented Indian National Congress; Mohd Yousuf Tarigami represented CPI(M); Advocate Muzaffar Iqbal Khan as independent legislator while Waheed ur Rehman Parra represented Peoples Democratic Party during the meeting.

In his opening remarks, the Speaker emphasized on the importance of dialogue, cooperation and consensus building for effective proceedings and productivity of the house. He urged upon the representatives of all parties to contribute actively in discussions and debates as MLAs are vital for highlighting issues of public welfare during the session of house.

“The Budget Session is a crucial time for policy deliberations and financial planning. I urge all of you and your members to engage in meaningful debates, uphold house decorum and work towards the collective good of our people as well as entire Jammu and Kashmir,” maintained the Speaker.

Highlighting the significance of Question Hour, Speaker Rather encouraged the legislators to make the most of this opportunity to hold the government accountable.

“Question Hour is a key tool that ensures government accountability. Legislators must utilize this time effectively to raise public concerns and seek concrete responses,” emphasized the Speaker.

The Speaker further called upon all the political parties for effective coordination during the entire session of the house. He underlined that productivity of house is possible only after there is coordination between opposition and the government in highlighting peoples issues and addressing them respectively.

Speaking during the meeting, LoP, Sunil Sharma, said that the public issues need to be highlighted during the assembly session which is possible only when no disruptions occur. He highlighted that credibility of MLAs is at stake during the proceedings of house and members need to be responsive towards public issues and make government accountable on that rather than indulging in disruptions. He assured the Speaker that the legislators of his party will ensure smooth business of the house.

In his remarks during the meeting, Ghulam Ahmad Mir of INC said that question hour being an important tool for making government accountable, should not be disrupted.

CPI (M) Legislator, M.Y Tarigami, underlined that accountability of the government is possible only through smooth conduct of house proceedings. He also called for coordination between government and the opposition to make house proceedings productive and fruitful.

During the meeting, NC Legislator, Mubarik Gul, said that the public issues need to be highlighted during the assembly proceedings as legislators are face of the people during session of house.

Waheed ur Rehman Parra of PDP and Independent Legislator, Advocate Muzaffar Iqbal Khan sought proportionate time for all MLAs while raising public issues during the business of house.

The Speaker assured all parties that their concerns and suggestions would be duly considered for fair and impartial proceedings of the house. He highlighted that the road for productive budget session has been laid with this fruitful meeting.

BJP

of the Jammu and Kashmir Assembly is scheduled to begin from March 3, Leader of the Opposition (LoP), Sunil Sharma on Thursday said that they will not allow any anti-national or unconstitutional bill to be tabled in the House.

“Our stand is clear in the upcoming assembly session. We will not allow any unconstitutional and anti-national bill to be introduced in the budget session,” Sunil Sharma told reporters before attending the All Party Meeting called by the Speaker J&K Assembly, Abdul Rahim Rather here at the Civil Secretariat.

The budget session will be held in two phases from March 3 to 25 and April 7 to 11.

Sunil Kumar Sharma and Surjit Singh Slathia from BJP, Ali Mohammad Sagar and Mubarak Gul from the ruling National Conference, CPI (M) MLA Mohammad Yusuf Tarigami, Congress MLA Ghulam Ahmed Mir, People's Conference's Sajjad Gani Lone, PDP's Wahidul Rehman Parra and Independent MLA Muzaffar Khan attended the meeting.

“We have also objected to the way some

MLAs have brought the private member bills into the public domain before bringing them to the notice of the Speaker,” said the LoP.

Meanwhile, Congress leader Ghulam Ahmad Mir said that all party meetings strengthen mutual relations, leading to coordination among the political parties.

CPI (M) MLA Mohammad Yusuf Tarigami, said, “Opposition parties were invited to attend the meeting and as far as the concerns of the common people who have elected their representatives, have hopes that their issues will be raised and addressed by the government in an upcoming Assembly session.”

The first session of the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir Assembly was held in November last year in Srinagar while the second assembly and first budget session of the first assembly of the Union Territory will begin on March 3 in Jammu.

DRUGS

who exploit them. “It's not like the problem has no solution. J&K Police is there to help people out of it. Whatever issues you have, come to us. We are there for you,” he asserted.

SSP said their tough action against drug dealers and suppliers in the previous year curtailed the cases, adding that there is always scope for improvement and J&K Police is committed to eradicating this menace.

Highlighting the importance of identifying and nurturing talent, SSP encouraged youngsters to make use of available resources to shape their careers. “Every youngster has a responsibility to identify their talent. There are several online resources available to guide them on what to do with their specific skills. They should also find the right department and forum that will help them shine,” he added.

Singh said the government is actively working to support youth talent and development, with multiple programs launched by various departments. He said any gap in access to these opportunities is primarily due to a lack of awareness, not a lack of initiatives.

“Kids should be aware. The government leaves no stone unturned to hone the talent of youth. If there is a lack, then it's an information gap, nothing else,” he added.

The event organised under the Civic Action Programme and sponsored by the Range Police Headquarters, North Circle DIG, witnessed the participation of around 51 school students and over 20 government officials from different departments. “It is aimed at bridging the gap between the youth and the police while engaging them in constructive activities,” SSP Singh added—(KNO)

ATHAWALE

peace, and economic growth.”

“Before August 5, 2019 (when J&K's special status was revoked) there was widespread fear among tourists about visiting the region but the situation has improved since then. It can be gauged from the fact that over 2.5 million tourists visited J&K last year, a significant increase compared to the past,” he said.

Revocation of Article 370, he said, created a more peaceful environment, fostered development, and opened up new employment opportunities in the region. “The tourism getting a boost has contributed to economic growth,” said Athawale.

He asserted that J&K would get its statehood back at an appropriate time.

Athawale also pointed out the record voter turnout in the Jammu and Kashmir assembly elections held last year, which he viewed as a positive sign of increasing democratic participation in the region—

LOCAL BODIES

constituted with determining OBC reservation quotas. The Commission's term officially ended on December 31, 2024, however, its tenure was extended till February 28, 2025 for accomplishment of the complete work.

Pertinent to mention that the Commission was constituted for the purpose of conducting empirical studies on OBC representation, engaging with stakeholders and recommending proportional reservations in urban and rural local bodies. Accordingly, during its tenure, the Commission analyzed records, surveys and census data to determine the OBC population share and their representation in the local bodies governance structure.

The panel sought data inputs from the government departments, institutions and experts; held consultations with researchers and conducted field visits across J&K to ensure a comprehensive assessment before submitting its report to the government.

The J&K Local Bodies Dedicated Backward Classes Commission was established on June 11, 2023, in compliance with Supreme Court Ruling in the K. Krishnamurthy Vs Union of India (2010) and Vikas Krishna Rao Gawli v. Maharashtra (2021) case.

WEATHER

reaches of Kupwara, Shopian, Razdan Top in Bandipora, Jawahar Tunnel, Pir Panjal Range of mountains in south Kashmir, Sonamarg, Kargil, Drass, and Zaskaner in Ladakh Union

Territory, adding to the winter chill in these areas.

The Met forecast the weather generally will remain cloudy with light to moderate rain/snow at most places with isolated heavy rain/snow over both Kashmir and Jammu divisions during the next 24 hours.

The weather generally will remain cloudy with light rain/snow at isolated to scattered places during March 1 and 2, while light to moderate rain and snow will occur at many places on March 3.

The weather will generally remain dry from March 4 to 8.

It has also issued an advisory stating that there is a possibility of temporary disruption of surface transportation, mainly over Sadhna Pass, Razdan Pass, the Sonamarg-Zojila-Gumri axis, Mughal Road, Sinthan Pass, and other major roads of hilly districts.

It has also advised tourists, travellers, and transporters to plan their trips accordingly and follow admin/traffic advisories.

Farmers have also been advised to suspend irrigation and other farm operations during the period.

MEHBOOBA

and anti-national bill to be introduced in the budget session,” the LoP Sunil Sharma told reporters in Jammu before attending the All Party Meeting called by the Speaker J&K Assembly, Abdul Rahim Rather.

Mehbooba questioned the BJP legislator asserting that the J&K Assembly should remain a space for open debate.

“Quite surprising to see a BJP legislator attempting to influence the Speaker of the assembly about what should or shouldn't be permitted in the House. The Speaker's role is to maintain fairness and order, not to cater to any single party's agenda,” she said in a post on x.

“The question arises who determines what qualifies as anti-national or unconstitutional. The J&K assembly should be a forum for open debate, not a setting where anyone dictates a list of acceptable topics,” she added.

The upcoming J&K Assembly budget session, which would be the first budget of the Omar Abdullah-led National Conference government after assuming power on October 16 last year, is set to be stormy. The J&K People's Conference chairman and MLA Sajad Lone has submitted a resolution to be taken up for the restoration of Article 370 during the budget session. Besides, private members bills seeking a ban on alcohol sale and consumption across the Union Territory are also likely to be tabled in the House.

MIRWAIZ

chief minister Mehbooba Mufti, and other political leaders including Sajad Lone, Tanvir Sadiq, Salman Sagar, Altaf Bukhari, and Muzaffar Shah expressed their condolences and sympathies with the bereaved family.

JKNC president Dr. Farooq Abdullah, accompanied by party chief spokesperson Tanvir Sadiq, also participated in the funeral prayers of Dr Masoodi.

Jammu & Kashmir Grand Mufti, Mufti Nasir-ul-Islam, extended his condolences and prayers for the departed soul.

Despite the inclement weather, people gathered in large numbers to attend the funeral prayers of Dr Masoodi and then later offered condolences with the family and Mirwaiz Kashmir Dr. Moulvi Muhammad Umar Farooq.

The Jammu and Kashmir Awami Action Committee (AAC), as per a statement issued to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), expressed profound grief over Dr. Masoodi's demise and paid rich tribute to his social and humanitarian contributions.

The organization extended condolences and solidarity to Mirwaiz Umar Farooq and the bereaved Masoodi family. Special condolences were also conveyed to Dr. Masoodi's sons, Murtaza Masoodi and Yahya Masoodi, his brothers, Syedain Masoodi, Hasnain Masoodi, and Saqlain Masoodi, as well as his son-in-law, Ayub Afzal Khan.

WINTER VACATION

the extension of winter vacations for schools in Kashmir division,” Ittoo said.

The minister further said keeping in view the health and safety of students, they will take a decision accordingly

“If weather conditions do not improve, we may consider five days extension in vacation for primary level classes and in case there is more snowfall, we will consider extending the vacation till March 5 for all classes,” she said.

Meanwhile, the Jammu and Kashmir Board of School Education (JKBOSE) official said that there is no change in exams slated for Friday.

“As of now, there is no change in schedule for the exams that are slated for Thursday. Tomorrow, we have only one paper for 11th class,” the official said.

Pertinently, the government on December-06 had announced winter vacation for all public and recognised private educational institutions in the Kashmir division as well as in the winter zones of Jammu division in two phases starting from December 10.



DC Srinagar finalizes arrangements for holy month of Ramadan

All Departments directed to ensure availability of essential services, supplies; stresses intensified market checking

HT News Network

SRINAGAR, FEBRUARY 27: In the wake of forth-coming holy month of Ramadan, the Deputy Commissioner (DC) Srinagar, Dr Bilal Mohi-Ud-Din Bhat on Thursday chaired a meeting at DC Office Complex here in order to take review of the preparations/ arrangements being made by the line departments for ensuring all basic amenities and essential supplies during the blessed month.

At the outset, the DC sought a detailed action plan from concerned departments regarding the arrangements being put in place during the holy month of Ramadan related to availability of essential commodities, supply of electricity & water, sanitation & cleanliness measures, transport facilities,



etc. On the occasion, the DC directed KPDCL to ensure scheduled power supply in the month, particularly during Sehri and Iftari times. He asked the PHE Department to make proactive arrangements for adequate supply of drinking water in all areas of the district.

Similarly, the Department of FCS&CA was asked to ensure adequate supply of essentials including Ration, LPG and distribute

monthly ration to the consumers well in advance.

He also stressed on deploying joint market checking teams under the supervision of SDM, East and SDM West from tomorrow to carry out market checking in order to curb profiteering, hoarding of essentials in the market, in addition to maintain quality and standard of the food items. The DC also directed Chief Animal Husbandry Officer, AD FCS&CA/ Food

Safety Officer/ Tehsildars/ BDOs to check quality of chicken/ meat and other daily consumable food items so that no adulteration exists in the markets of Srinagar.

The SMC authorities were directed to conduct sanitation and cleanliness drives in all areas to ensure proper cleanliness, besides instructions were given that all defunct street lights be restored on war footing in all areas.

Besides, Additional Deputy Commissioner, Khalid Hussain Malik and Additional Deputy Commissioner, Syed Ahmad Kataria, the meeting was attended by Superintendent of Police, Chief Planning Officer, SDM East, SDM West, Tehsildars, BDOs, Senior Officers from all concerned Departments and representatives from J&K Wakf Board.

Srinagar Municipal Corporation intensifies Public Awareness Events on River Conservation

HT News Network

SRINAGAR, FEBRUARY 27: In a significant effort to promote river conservation and environmental sustainability, the Srinagar Municipal Corporation (SMC), in collaboration with the National River Conservation Directorate (NRCD) under the Ministry of Jal Shakti, Government of India, organized a series of public awareness programs across the city.

The events included a Walkathon, Plog Run, Plantation Drive, Cleanliness Drives for Water Bodies, Quiz Competition, Essay Writing and Slogan Competition, all aimed at educating and engaging the public in the preservation of water resources.

The activities witnessed enthusiastic participation from students, environmentalists, volunteers, and local citizens, underscoring the collective



responsibility to protect the region's vital water bodies.

Commissioner SMC, Dr. Owais Ahmed actively participated in the Plog Run, Plantation Drive, and Walkathon, setting an example for citizens and emphasizing the importance of collective action.

Speaking at the event, Dr. Owais highlighted the critical role of sustainable water management and urged citizens to adopt

eco-friendly practices.

"Rivers are the lifelines of our ecosystem, and it is our duty to conserve them for future generations. Through these awareness programs, we aim to instill a sense of responsibility among the public. I urge everyone to join hands in protecting our water bodies and ensuring a greener, cleaner environment," Dr. Owais said.

The Plog Run combined fitness with environmental action, as participants

collected plastic waste along riverbanks. The Plantation Drive focused on enhancing green cover along water bodies to prevent soil erosion and improve water quality.

Meanwhile, the Cleanliness Drive targeted the removal of pollutants and the restoration of the natural flow of water channels.

The Quiz Competition, Essay Writing, and Slogan Competition provided a platform for young minds to showcase their knowledge and creativity on the theme of river conservation. Winners were felicitated with certificates and awards to encourage their continued efforts in environmental protection.

The Srinagar Municipal Corporation reaffirmed its commitment in preserving natural resources and called upon the community to actively participate in such initiatives. Citizens

New Radiology Block inaugurated at Central Veterinary Hospital Srinagar

HT News Network



SRINAGAR, FEBRUARY 27: In a significant development, a newly constructed radiology block was inaugurated at the Central Veterinary Hospital (CVH) Srinagar to address long-standing challenges in providing accurate and timely diagnosis for animals in the region.

The Radiology Block aimed to enhance radio-diagnostic services marks a significant advancement in veterinary healthcare services for pets in the region.

The inauguration ceremony was presided over by Ahsan Pardesi, Member of the Legislative Assembly (MLA) for Lal Chowk, alongside officers including Dr. Parvinder Singh Sudan, Director of Animal Husbandry Department Kashmir and Dr. Syed Altaf Gilani, Superintendent of the Hospital.

MLA Lalchowk praised the all round development of the department and announced providing an ambulance out of CDF for CVH besides extending every possible help. He also requested the authorities to start a dedicated service for rescuing abandoned animals.

Labour Department Kashmir checks on the Placement Agencies deploying workers for domestic purposes

HT News Network

SRINAGAR, FEBRUARY 27: The Labour Department, Kashmir today started a campaign in all the districts to have checks on the Placement Agencies, who usually get their workers from other states and deploy them for the domestic purposes at various residential homes of the Kashmir Valley. The aim of this campaign is only to ensure that these workers are formally brought from the other states with their consent and are not Bonded Labours.

Further, it is also to ensure that these workers/ domestic helpers are insured under various schemes of the department so that during any untoward incident the house owner, the worker and the establishment owner remain secured, so far as the health or any accident is concerned. Accordingly,



ingly, it was found that 40 number of Placement Agencies are registered with the Labour Department of Kashmir who have been deploying 2000 (approx.) number of workers as domestic helpers to the various sites.

Today 40 Placement Agencies were inspected in the districts of Kashmir Division in which compulsory registrations of the Labour Department were obtained from the establishment owners, the details of the workers was also obtained from the establishment

owners in which first of all it was ensured that no worker was below the age of 14 years deployed for this purpose. Secondly, it was also ensured that every worker has come with his consent and payment is made in the bank accounts of the respective worker.

The workers were personally interacted by the teams at various offices of these Placement Agencies and confirmed from them the living conditions, wages, their age and other necessary help provided to them during their stay and trans-

port from their homes to the final destinations.

During the inspections each and every Placement Agency was informed to have each worker registered under Employees State Insurance Scheme so that everybody in the chain remains secured, particularly the labourer and the house owner. It is also requested of the general public to ascertain the ESIC registration of these workers before getting them for any kind of help so that in case of any untoward incident, with this helper, both the helper and the owner remain secured. The campaign was launched under the guidance of Deputy Labour Commissioner, Kashmir who along with Assistant Labour Commissioner, Srinagar and other Labour Officers/ Labour Inspectors inspected various placement agencies of Srinagar District.

Altaf Bukhari condemns Admin for halting Apni Party's protest against power crisis

HT News Network

Srinagar, February 27 Apni Party President Syed Mohammad Altaf Bukhari on Thursday condemned the administration for stopping party leaders and workers from holding protest demonstrations against the ongoing power crisis and preventing their procession from reaching Lal Chowk.

On his X handle, Syed Mohammad Altaf Bukhari wrote, "It is highly condemnable that the administration forcefully stopped the protest by Apni Party leaders and workers, preventing them from proceeding towards Lal Chowk."

"This was a peaceful protest against the ongoing power crisis, aimed at demanding an uninterrupted power supply during the upcoming month of Ramzan, halting disconnections for non-payment by marginalized people, and restoring their connections in view of the holy month. Since people are already grappling with an economic crisis, we urge the government to extend the amnesty beyond March 2025," he added.

Srinagar Heritage Festival 'Soan Meeras': Div Com Kashmir, DC Srinagar, Comm. SMC visit Kashmir Haat

HT News Network



SRINAGAR, FEBRUARY 27: Divisional Commissioner (Div Com) Kashmir, Vijay Kumar Bidhuri, accompanied by Deputy Commissioner (DC) Srinagar, Dr Bilal Mohi-Ud-Din Bhat and Commissioner SMC, Dr Owais Ahmad today visited Kashmir Haat (Numaish Gah) here and witnessed the ongoing events of Srinagar Heritage Festival 'Soan Meeras'. On the occasion, the Div Com engaged with the diversified cultural activities highlighting timeless tradition, cultural heritage and art of the Kashmir valley preserving essence of Kashmir's cultural legacy and traditional practices. The Div Com appreciated the District Administration Srinagar and Indira Gandhi National Centre of Art for organizing Srinagar Heritage Festival to showcase the essence of vintage Kashmir, portray past timeless glory through live exhibition and demonstrations. The Div Com appreciated the District Administration Srinagar and Indira Gandhi National Centre of Art for organizing Srinagar Heritage Festival to showcase the essence of vintage Kashmir.

Stock, supply & distribution scenario of fertilizers reviewed for Kashmir Div.

Coordinated efforts needed among stakeholders to ensure quality fertilizer supply to the farmers: Jt. Director Agriculture

SRINAGAR, FEBRUARY 27: To review the overall scenario (stock, supply and distribution) of fertilizers in Kashmir division, a meeting of concerned stakeholders was today organised at Agriculture Complex Lalmandi, here.

The meeting convened by Joint Director Agriculture Extension Kashmir, Sartaj Ahmad Shah witnessed participation of heads/ representatives of fertilizer companies carrying out their business in Kashmir division and concerned officers of the enforcement wing of the Department of Agriculture.

Addressing the meeting, JD Agriculture said that the Department is committed to safeguarding the interests of the farming community of the region. He exhorted the stakeholders including representatives of fertilizer companies to put in all the efforts and ensure that only the quality inputs including fertilizers reaches the farming community.

He highlighted the importance of trans-



parency and accountability in the system to ensure smooth distribution of quality fertilizers to the growers and farmers. He said that the primary objective of the

law enforcement wing of the department is to ensure the availability of quality inputs to the farming community of the region through proper sale outlets at

appropriate times. He impressed upon the concerned officers to make sincere efforts for online service delivery to the farmers. Shah said that while functioning in the field, the concerned officers must ensure that all the provisions of the insecticide act, fertilizer control order are implemented in letter and spirit.

The meeting was attended by Deputy Director Law Enforcement, Plant Protection Officer Kashmir, District Law Enforcement Officer North, District Law Enforcement Officer South and other senior officers of the Enforcement Wing of Agriculture Department. Addressing the meeting, JD Agriculture said that the Department is committed to safeguarding the interests of the farming community of the region. He exhorted the stakeholders including representatives of fertilizer companies to put in all the efforts and ensure that only the quality inputs including fertilizers reaches the farming community.

EDITORIAL

Heavens open up much to the relief of common masses

At a time when the people of Kashmir valley were worried over the lack of precipitation during the winter Almighty Allah shower his blessings. For the past three days or so all the areas of the Kashmir valley are receiving rains and snow and there is further forecast for the same over the next 24 hours or so. While the plains have been receiving rains since February 25 the higher reaches of the valley received moderate to heavy snowfall over the past three days or so.

Most of the plains have been experiencing snowfall since afternoon and one can hope that there would be a good snowfall at Srinagar and other district headquarters. Since there was negligible precipitation in the valley during the winter months it was apprehended that the water crisis would hit the people very badly in the coming months. Some of the springs had dried up and alarm bells had started ringing among the people of Kashmir. These worries seem to have been addressed following the rains and snowfall over the past few days.

There is a saying that Almighty Allah is the ultimate planner and it is he who always thinks best for the people of the world. This saying came true once the heavens opened up and the Kashmir valley received snow and rain. Some of the people opine that as and when the educational institutes are about to reopen after the winter vacation there is snow and rainfall in the Kashmir valley. Given the present weather situation it is assumed that there will be an extension in winter vacations for the schools in the valley.

Most of the people were upset that the Meteorological department has failed to predict the exact weather system for the winter during this year. These people demand that credibility needs to be restored to this department so that the forecast is almost correct and people believe the weather bulletins issued from time to time. As on date there is a huge deficit when it comes to weather forecasts and the belief of people on weather bulletins.

With the present spell of rain and snowfall one can expect that there will be a huge relief to the people belonging to different sections of society. On top of it one can hope that there would be no problem with clean drinking water. At the same time the people associated with the agriculture and horticulture sectors are also upbeat saying that their problems are also likely to be solved.

When Comedy Crosses The Line: Obscenity, Ethics And Accountability

ADVOCATE NASIR UL ISLAM

With the rise of digital platforms, content creators, including YouTubers, influencers, and podcasters, have gained unprecedented access to large audiences. However, this digital revolution has also led to frequent legal violations, including obscenity, irresponsible journalism, and breaches of victim privacy in cases of sexual offences.

The recent controversies involving YouTubers Ranveer Allahbadia and Samya Raina have highlighted the misuse of digital platforms, ignorance of media ethics, and the need for stricter enforcement of obscenity laws. Indian laws such as the Bhartiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), 2023, the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, the Juvenile Justice (JJ) Act, and the Information Technology (IT) Act set clear boundaries for responsible digital behaviour. The legal framework governing obscenity laws, victim privacy protection, media guidelines, and Supreme Court rulings on digital content aims to curb the misuse of social media by YouTubers and digital creators while maintaining the delicate balance between free speech and ethical journalism. These laws can be better understood by examining the relevant legal provisions below.

Laws Governing Digital Obscenity
Bhartiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), 2023

The Bhartiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), 2023, which replaces the Indian Penal Code (IPC), has retained and revised provisions related to obscenity and the protection of victims of sexual offences. Below is a detailed analysis of the relevant provisions:

evant provisions:

Section 294 - Sale, etc., of Obscene Books

Criminalizes the sale, distribution, or public exhibition of obscene material in any form, including books, drawings, paintings, or electronic content. Any content shall be deemed obscene if it is lascivious, appeals to prurient interest, or tends to deprave and corrupt persons who are likely to read, see, or hear it. Violators shall be punished with imprisonment of up to two years and a fine.

Section 295 - Sale, etc., of Obscene Objects to Children

Whoever sells, hires, distributes, exhibits, or circulates any obscene object referred to in Section 294 to a child or attempts to do so shall be punished with imprisonment of up to three years and a fine.

Section 296 - Obscene Acts and Songs

Whoever, to the annoyance of others, performs any obscene act, gesture, or utters any obscene song or ballad in or near a public place shall be punished with imprisonment of up to three months, a fine, or both.

Section 72 - Disclosure of Identity of the Victim of Certain Offences

Prohibits the disclosure of the identity or name of victims of rape or sexual assault in any form, including print, publishing, or electronic media. Any violator shall be punished with imprisonment of up to two years and a fine.

For more clarity, refer to the following Supreme Court judgment:

Nipun Saxena v. Union of India (2018) - Held that even indirect disclosure, such as blurred images or initials, is punishable.

Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act,

2012

Section 23 - Procedure for Media

No person shall report on any child in any form of media, studio, or photographic facility without complete and authentic information. Such reports must not lower the child's reputation or infringe upon their privacy.

Additionally, media reports must not disclose the child's identity, including name, address, photograph, family details, school, or neighbourhood, which may lead to identification. Any violation shall be punishable with imprisonment of no less than six months, which may extend to one year.

Section 13 - Use of a Child for Pornographic Purposes

Whoever uses a child in any form of media, including the internet or any printed/electronic form, for sexual gratification shall be guilty of using a child for pornographic purposes. Violators shall be punished with imprisonment of no less than five years and a fine.

Juvenile Justice (JJ) Act, 2015
Section 74 - Prohibition of Media Disclosure

Media, including newspapers, magazines, news-sheets, audiovisual platforms, and other communication forms, are prohibited from disclosing a child's name, address, school, or any other identifiable details. Furthermore, they cannot publish a child's photograph.

This prohibition applies to children in conflict with the law, in need of care and protection, or victims/witnesses of crimes. Any person who contravenes this provision shall be punished with imprisonment of up to six months, a fine of up to two lakh rupees, or both.

Digital Offenses and IT Act, 2000 Provisions

Section 67 - Obscene Material in Electronic Form

Criminalizes the publication or transmission of obscene material in electronic form. Offenders shall be punished with imprisonment of up to three years and a fine of up to five lakh rupees.

Section 67A - Sexually Explicit Content

Criminalizes the publication and transmission of material containing sexually explicit acts in electronic form. Offenders shall be punished with imprisonment of up to five years and a fine of up to ten lakh rupees.

For clarity, refer to:

Shreya Singhal v. Union of India (2015) - Clarified that freedom of expression is protected, but content violating decency and morality can be regulated under Article 19(2) of the Constitution.

Press Council of India (PCI) Norms of Journalistic Conduct

Obscenity and vulgarity must be eschewed. Newspapers and journalists must not publish anything obscene, vulgar, or offensive to public good taste.

Advertisements must not be vulgar or depict women in a nude or lewd posture as if they were commercial commodities for sale.

The globalization and liberalization of media do not grant a license to misuse freedom of the press or lower societal values.

The media has a duty to preserve and promote cultural heritage and social values rather than promote the "so-called popular permissiveness."

The Need for Public Awareness

The incident underscores

the ignorance of digital creators regarding laws on obscenity, victim privacy, and ethical journalism. Content creators must educate themselves on these legal aspects. Workshops and legal literacy programs should be introduced for social media influencers, journalists, media houses, YouTubers, and podcasters.

Conclusion

The Ranveer Allahbadia and Samya Raina controversy is a stark reminder that freedom of speech on digital platforms comes with legal and ethical responsibilities. Laws such as the BNS, IT Act, POCSO, and JJ Act aim to curb obscenity, protect victim privacy, and ensure responsible digital journalism.

The Bhartiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), 2023, retains and strengthens provisions related to obscenity and victim protection. The penalties for obscene acts and victim privacy violations remain stringent, ensuring compliance by media, digital platforms, and individuals.

With the rise of digital content creation and social media misuse, these laws play a crucial role in preventing obscenity, protecting victim identities, and holding violators accountable. However, ignorance and misuse of these laws by content creators continue to pose challenges.

With the Supreme Court emphasizing stricter enforcement, digital platforms must adopt stronger content moderation policies. In the evolving digital landscape, ensuring legal compliance while preserving creative freedom remains a critical challenge.

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Defeating drug addiction

JASIM FAROOQ

Over the years, drug abuse has gripped the youth in the UT is a serious concern. Though few reports are published from time to time, the menace demands greater attention from all quarters. People of the UT need to introspect and find remedial measures for the disease that has done much harm to the society.

The larger role has to be played by the government as with few improved policy measures and legislations drug and substance abuse can be controlled.

While many programmes that highlight the adverse affects of drug abuse and addiction are held in the UT throughout the year by governmental and non-governmental organizations, it does not appear to assuage the

problem. Many experts are of the opinion that the graph of drug abuse in J&K has been rising at an alarming rate in the last five years.

As more and more addicts are identified, de-addiction or detoxification does not go with those numbers. There are few such centers in the UT that are trying to control the damage. Moreover, due to drug addiction many people are caught

in the web of crime and deviant behaviors.

As has been found, it is not the after effects that prompt addicts and abusers to depart from acceptable behaviour and get involved in any criminal activity, but the urge to acquire these substances in the first place. There is a general perception that peer pressure is largely responsible for drug abuse among the young, adolescents. People do

acknowledge it, but there need to be in-depth and extensive studies to find out all underlying reasons.

Proper education about hazards of drug abuse need to be inducted in the courses/education programs. It is also responsibility of parents to guide and help their children especially during such stages of growth when they are vulnerable. A broader approach and

new strategies that are localized can do better than following age old models and concepts.

The victims of drug abuse deserve a helping hand and must be given every possible assistance to live a normal and peaceful life. Defeating drug addiction is a collective responsibility and serious efforts are needed to nip this evil in the bud.

(Author is a social activist and researcher)

The Evolution of Radio: From Frequency to Fragmentation

IFRAH MUSHTAQ

Back in the folds of my childhood, every morning as I awoke, one sound remained constant-woven into the fabric of my days, filling the spaces between dreams and reality. It was the Radio, humming softly in the back-ground, a quiet yet powerful presence that felt as essential as the morning air.

Our home carried a different warmth as each program aired, a pause in time, a presence that settled into our hearts. Humsafar Marriage Counseling Program with Fayaz Ahmad Zaroo offered answers to questions we never dared to ask aloud. Gandhi Katha, with its deliberate, measured words, echoed a past that refused to be forgotten.

The afternoons belonged to my Mother, who, amidst her chores, would pause to listen to Bazmi Niswa'n, those dis-

tant voices carrying stories she understood in a language beyond words. Then came the Pahadi Program, with its familiar songs of home, followed by Zamindaar Baayan Hund Program, speaking to those whose lives were measured not by hours but by the turning of soil and the changing of seasons. And as evening stretched its arms, Sheharbeen arrived like a bridge, tying the distant to the familiar, bringing the world outside our small home into its very heart.

Bachun hund program (Pholwan toor) transformed our home into a playground of imagination, while Radio drama-the drama that filled the room with shadows and whispered stories-turned silence into a theatre, leaving echoes long after the radio fell silent.

Back then, we waited. For a single program, for a single voice, for a moment that felt



like it belonged to us alone. That wait was never impatience- it was anticipation, a ritual that made time feel valuable. Today, we no longer wait. We have the world at our fingertips and entertainment on demand, yet nothing ever truly settles in the soul the way radio once did. We move from

one distraction to another, consuming but never savouring, hearing but never truly listening.

The radio wasn't just news or entertainment-it was a gathering, a shared presence in our home. It brought us closer and made us react together. There was beauty in that

shared experience-in how stories weren't just heard but discussed, how laughter and silence were felt as a family. Now, we sit in the same rooms, but with screens between us, lost in separate worlds. We now have more choices, more voices and more screens-but somehow, it doesn't fill the silence in the same way.

And then, there was the art of listening. The kind of listening that did not rely on images forced us to imagine, feel, and understand. Radio trained us to pay attention, to hear the weight in a pause, the unsaid in a sigh. It made us present. Today, we live in a time where distractions are endless, where silence feels uncomfortable, and where patience is rare. And maybe, in the race to consume, we lost the ability to truly listen.

Perhaps the radio was never just a machine. Perhaps it was the heartbeat of a home, the

thread that wove lives together, the keeper of moments that refuse to fade. It was more than a simple source of entertainment-it was an experience that lived in the spaces between the words, between the pauses, and in the silence after the stories ended. And maybe, if we close our eyes and listen- really listen- we might still hear it, not as a hum of static, but as a song of connection, waiting for us to remember.

In a world that now sings to the tune of endless notifications, where every moment demands to be filled with something new, there's a quiet longing for those simpler times. Yes, we must stay updated, informed, and connected to the world around us-but in the rush of it all, let's not forget the value of slowing down, of listening. The radio, with its magic, showed us that sometimes, the most powerful

stories were told not through images or screens, but through the simple act of listening. And in that listening, we were not just passive recipients of sound. We were participants, connected in a shared experience that bound us together in a way no device, no matter how advanced, can replicate.

Maybe it's time we go back to our radios. Not as a replacement for the new, but as a reminder of the warmth we once found in shared experiences, in the comfort of voices that filled our homes with stories, with meaning. Maybe it's time to remember the simplicity and power of truly listening-because sometimes, the most meaningful stories are those that are heard, not seen.

And in that silence, we might find what we've been missing all along.

The writer is a student of English Literature at Government Degree College (GDC) Baramulla

Brains Behind Bars, Bluffs on Thrones: The Broken Promises of Education



NAWAZZ IBN AHAD

In the tranquil of hinterlands of arcadian and rural areas, where yearnings and aspirations once soared like free birds, a grim reality now clips their wings. The brood and erudite youth in villages, armed with degrees earned through years of sweat and swelter and forego and sacrifice, now find themselves staring into a void where fortuity and opportunities are as scarce as rain in a drought. The dream of securing a stable livelihood has crumbled like a sandcastle against the tides of economic stagnation and tightens its grip like a relentless tide, washing away all expectations. With every passing day, their backs bend under the burden of uncertainty, their once-radiant faces now pale yellow, as if they have already touched the frantic and deathbed of their ambitions. The fire in their eyes, once brimming with the reflection of bright possibilities, has dimmed. These very eyes, once vast as oceans where dreams set sail like mighty ships, are now barren landscapes, dried by the harsh winds of joblessness. The waves of hope that once danced in their gaze have receded, leaving behind an endless stretch of emptiness.

Now, hopelessness is tightening its grip like a vice, pushing many into dementia-like states where their thoughts scatter like autumn leaves caught in an endless whirl of uncertainty. Parents who once beamed with pride at their children's academic success now sigh in disappointment and chagrin as they watch their highly educated sons and daughters struggle to make ends meet. The cycle is merciless—dreams are nurtured, knowledge is gained, sacrifices are made, yet in the end, all roads lead to a dead end. Those who were meant to lead classrooms, offices, and institutions now roam the streets, their qualifications reduced to mere words on paper. Some, in desperation, migrate to cities where they are met with rejection, while others remain in their villages, forced to trade their education for menial labor just to survive. What was once seen as the pathway to progress has now become a road leading nowhere. The frustration of jobless graduates in villages is more than just an economic setback—it is an emotional and social disaster. Years of hard work and sacrifice seem to be going down the drain, leaving young minds restless and disheartened. As days turn into years of unemployment, the spark in their eyes is slowly fading. Now, with sunken cheeks and weary expressions, they roam their villages with yellowed faces, their once-bright hopes dimmed like lanterns flickering in the wind. The weight of disappointment bends their backs, while their tear-filled eyes, turned toward the sky, glisten like diamonds resting on the soft petals of a leaf—silent yet speaking of the anguish buried deep within. What is left for them? A life of uncertainty. A future that fades before it even begins. The realization that they have been deceived—sold the dream of education without

a bridge to employment. Their tears fall silently, like diamonds slipping from the edges of a leaf, unnoticed in the vast indifference of a system that continues to fail them. With industries keeping their distance from rural landscapes and government schemes failing to hit the mark, these bright minds are left to wander in circles of uncertainty. Once the torchbearers of knowledge, they now find themselves stuck between a rock and a hard place—either packing their bags for overcrowded cities or rolling up their sleeves for menial work that barely keeps the pot boiling. For village youth, unemployment is more than just an economic hurdle—it is a storm that sweeps away confidence and self-worth. The education system, which once appeared as a golden ladder, now feels like a mirage in a desert of hopelessness. Degrees that were once a badge of honor have become nothing more than framed pieces of paper gathering dust on walls, mocking their holders who find no doors opening for them. With no industries knocking on the doors of rural areas and job opportunities playing hide-and-seek, the youth find themselves running from pillar to post. Many, unable to make ends meet, are left with no choice but to switch lanes—from academics to manual labor, from classrooms to construction sites, from dreams of white-collar jobs to the harsh reality of blue-collar survival. Once the pride of their families and communities, educated youth in villages now find themselves at a dead end.

The knowledge that once promised them a better future has turned into an unbearable burden. Instead of wielding pens in university halls, they are now wielding tools in labor markets. The same degrees that once held the promise of a prestigious career now hang around their necks like shackles, pulling them into the abyss of frustration. The recent viral video of PhD scholars pushing wagons of the carts instead of delivering lectures as assistant professors is a brutal eye-opener. It paints a harsh picture of a system that has turned a blind eye to its brightest minds. This stark transformation—from the heights of academia to the depths of survival jobs—is a living testament to the deep cracks in employment policies that have failed to translate education into opportunities. The harsh truth is that rural areas are sitting on a ticking time bomb of unfulfilled dreams and wasted potential. If concrete steps are not taken soon, villages will continue to witness the tragic transformation of scholars into laborers, of knowledge into neglect, and of ambition into agony. Without urgent intervention, rural areas will continue to bleed talent, as its educated youth either migrate in search of opportunities or resign themselves to fate. The government must hit the ground running—investing in rural employment schemes, incentivizing industries to set up base in villages, and bridging the gap between education and employability. If the wheels of change do not start turning now, the cycle of despair will only tighten its grip, burying another generation of educated youth under the weight of broken promises and lost hopes. The time for lip service is over—action is the need of the hour.

ZAHID AHMAD LONE

Language plays a crucial role in human communication, influencing cultural values, social connections, and personal expression. In Kashmir, where traditions emphasize politeness and respectful dialogue, there has been a noticeable trend among the youth toward the use of inappropriate language in casual contexts, particularly on social media. The frequent use of profanity and derogatory terms, often driven by digital culture and current trends, has sparked discussions about its long-term effects on societal values, youth behaviour, and communication ethics. While some view this as a contemporary evolution of language, it is essential to evaluate the potential repercussions of this shift on Kashmiri society.

One significant issue concerning the use of inappropriate language among Kashmiri youth is the growing acceptance of disrespect. Historically, Kashmiris have maintained a culture of respectful communication, especially when interacting with elders, teachers, or authority figures. Even in informal discussions, politeness has been a deeply ingrained value. However, exposure to global media, unfiltered social media inter-

actions, and aggressive online content have altered these norms. Today, young people often resort to offensive language, sometimes without fully understanding the implications of their words. This trend is particularly evident on social media, where influencers, content creators, and public figures frequently use profanity to engage with their audiences.

The case of social media influencer Ranveer Allahbadia (BeerBiceps) exemplifies how informal speech, often laden with offensive language, can influence young viewers. Although his situation is not specifically linked to Kashmir, it illustrates how social media figures can shape the language and attitudes of their followers. Similarly, in the Kashmiri digital landscape, many local YouTubers and influencers have adopted a casual, often disrespectful tone to connect with their audience. The rise of “roasting culture,” where individuals publicly criticize or mock others using offensive language, has further normalized disrespectful communication, particularly among teenagers.

The prevalence of inappropriate language among Kashmiri youth is significantly influenced by digital platforms such as Instagram,

YouTube, Twitter, and Snapchat. While these platforms offer opportunities for self-expression, they also encourage unfiltered discussions in which profanity is frequently employed for humour, emphasis, or shock value. In Kashmir, where political and social issues are especially sensitive, the careless use of offensive language in online discussions has exacerbated animosity and division.

Additionally, many young people in Kashmir follow influencers who incorporate profanity into their content. While this language may seem entertaining, it gradually desensitizes young audiences to offensive speech, leading them to adopt similar language patterns in their everyday conversations. This trend is not exclusive to Kashmir; it has broader implications for youth culture globally. However, in a society like Kashmir, where language and manners are closely tied to cultural identity, this shift presents a significant challenge.

Language serves not only as a means of communication but also shapes thoughts, emotions, and behaviours. The frequent use of profanity can have psychological and social repercussions, particularly among the youth. Research indicates that

repeated exposure to negative or aggressive language can alter a person's mindset, resulting in increased frustration, intolerance, and even aggression. In Kashmir, where socio-political conditions already create a stressful and uncertain environment, the additional layer of aggressive language can exacerbate emotional instability. Many young individuals use profanity casually, often unaware that this habit can make them more susceptible to conflict, both online and offline.

The increasing prevalence of inappropriate language in casual conversations is not merely a personal choice; it significantly affects public discourse and community interactions. In educational institutions and social settings, the line between casual and disrespectful speech is becoming increasingly blurred. Many educators and community leaders are concerned that young people no longer recognize when their language is inappropriate. In professional environments, young employees who frequently use informal or offensive language may struggle to adapt to workplace norms, which can hinder their career advancement and professional relationships. Furthermore, social media

has normalized the practice of insulting others under the guise of humour or sarcasm. While some may perceive such language as harmless, it contributes to a broader culture that undermines respectful dialogue. The long-term consequence is the deterioration of constructive conversation, where aggressive expression takes precedence over meaningful discussion.

The rising prevalence of offensive language among Kashmiri youth reflects changing communication patterns shaped by social media, global influences, and digital interactions. While informal language is a natural aspect of youth expression, normalizing disrespectful speech can lead to significant social and psychological repercussions. To tackle this issue, educational institutions should implement awareness programs that promote respectful communication, emphasizing the effects of language on personal and professional relationships. Workshops focused on debating and public speaking can assist students in articulating their views confidently without resorting to offensive language. Parents also have a vital role in encouraging open conversations at home, modelling positive behaviour, and discouraging the

casual use of inappropriate language. When children see their elders communicating respectfully, they are more likely to emulate those behaviours.

Influencers and content creators need to acknowledge their influence on youth behaviour by fostering constructive conversations and steering clear of excessive profanity in their entertainment. Furthermore, local cultural and social organizations can motivate young people to appreciate their Kashmiri linguistic heritage while adapting to contemporary communication styles. Campaigns that advocate traditional values of respectful dialogue can help reconcile cultural preservation with modern speech practices. Instead of relying on offensive language, young individuals should be encouraged to expand their vocabulary, utilize creative expressions, and engage in meaningful conversations. By nurturing a culture of thoughtful communication both online and offline, Kashmiri society can maintain its cultural values while embracing new forms of expression.

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Enhancing Career Growth for School Teachers in J&K

RAYEES MASROOR

Career advancement plays a crucial role in maintaining motivation and enthusiasm in any profession. It ensures that employees remain engaged, strive for excellence, and contribute effectively to their respective fields. This is particularly significant in the education sector, where teachers shape the future of generations. Unfortunately, in Jammu and Kashmir, the stagnation in the career progression of school teachers is a pressing concern. The current system, which relies solely on seniority based promotions without considering any structured examination, has led to widespread disinterest and demotivation among educators. The lack of merit-based advancement not only affects the

morale of teachers but also directly impacts the overall academic environment, ultimately hampering educational outcomes.

Unlike in many other regions and countries where professional growth in the teaching sector is linked to performance evaluations, skill enhancement, and competitive examinations, our system still follows an old model. The absence of departmental examinations means that even a time bound promotion depends purely on seniority, without considering a teachers competence and professional development. This system discourages innovation, self-improvement, and excellence, leading to stagnation in teaching methodologies. In contrast, other Indian states and countries worldwide have adopted mechanisms where teachers must pass



competency-based tests or evaluations before moving up the career ladder. Such systems foster a culture of continuous learning and motivation, ultimately benefiting students and the education system at large.

There is a growing demand from teachers and the public to introduce departmental examinations for school teachers in Jammu and Kashmir. Such a reform would not

only create healthy competition among educators but also encourage them to upgrade their skills and knowledge regularly. By implementing a structured examination system for career advancement from teachers to masters and lecturers, the education department can ensure that promotions are awarded on merit, thereby improving the quality of teaching and fostering academic excellence. This

model also aligns with the recommendations of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, which advocates for a robust system of continuous professional development, performance assessments, and teacher training programs to enhance education standards.

NEP 2020 emphasizes competency based learning and suggests regular assessments for teachers to ensure they are equipped with the latest pedagogical skills. Many advanced education systems worldwide, including those in Finland, Singapore, and Japan, follow structured and merit based promotion systems for teachers. These models ensure that the competent and skilled educators progress in their careers, thereby enhancing the overall quality of education.

Introducing depart-

mental examinations for school teachers in Jammu and Kashmir would be a progressive step toward aligning the regions education system with global best practices. It would provide an incentive for teachers to remain engaged, improve their skills, and work towards professional growth. Moreover, it would lead to an overall enhancement in the teaching learning process, ensuring that students receive high quality education from well trained and motivated educators. By implementing such reforms, the education system in Jammu and Kashmir can move towards academic excellence and create a brighter future for both teachers and students.

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Snow in Kashmir, when lush green forests turned into whitish Snow and Winter

SAHIL MANZOOR

Snow enhances the beauty of the Kashmir Valley. Whitish like milk, mushy like sponge, so crispy, so cold. Snow has no alternative in the Kashmir Valley; snow has no artificial way out in Kashmir. Snow is not limited to what it literally is. There are a number of natural phenomena related to snow, like blizzard flurries of snow. Cold wave in all corners of Kashmir, accumulation of glaciers on the colossal shoulders of lofty mountains, meadows of famous tourist destinations like meadows of Pahalgam, meadows of Gulmarg, meadows of Doodhpathri, meadows of Sonamarg. Every water body freezes; the branches of the immense tree look like fruits turned into snow.

Winters are so special in the valley.

During winters, visitors from all corners of the world rush to Kashmir to catch beautiful memories in their android phones, DSLR cam-

eras. Not only visitors are from outside of Kashmir are curious to be witnesses of snowfall but locals also love the snow in the Kashmir Valley. Snow has great influence on Kashmir because it enhances the beauty of the Kashmir Valley and makes all corners of the valley look like a bridegroom. Nature makes up all lofty mountains, huge trees, meadows looking lush green and now turned into a white carpet.

Nature and snow

Snow itself defines the nature during winters in the valley and has great importance in a number of ways, like the accumulation of snow on lofty mountains provides the source of drinking water to all of Kashmir, and such glaciers bestow the clear crystal water to famous rivers of the Kashmir Valley like the Lidder River in Pahalgam, the Shaliganga River in Doodhpathri, and the Doodganga River in Yousmarg. Snow explains the beauty of nature and makes every natural surrounding so luscious and so cherished during winters.

When winter starts in Kashmir

Literally, winters start from the arrival of the 40-day period of Chilai Kalaan. The initial harsh 40 days end with the month of January, and winter ends on 20 March. On the 21st of March, the Novruz festival was celebrated in the Kashmir Valley. On this day, most people used baths with cold tap water and felt like winters were not more.

Winters are so special, and native people taste delicious and cultural dishes like HARRISA (a culinary dish of meat and a number of spices eaten with a piece of Kabab and Kashmiri bread, commonly called as kaandir tcho'ut), razma (kidney beans and radish, fishes, dry fruits, and several other delicious foods are being cooked during winters).

Snow as a source of water and generates employment for the tourism sector

Winters are no winters.

Winters are not winters when there is no heavy snowfall or snow after every two weeks in Kashmir.

Snow attracts visitors and is the main source of hydropower projects in Kashmir.

Games: sports activities can be performed only on snow

Kashmir Valley is one of the famous and renowned tourist destinations where a number of Bollywood movies were shot in the past and is now becoming the main hub for those who love winter games like skiing and snow rafting.

Cable car corporation: The gondola ride remains one of the great experiences of the visitor in Gulmarg. One can enjoy a gondola ride throughout the year and can explore the upper reaches of the Gulmarg, like Khillan Marg, etc.

Apart from this recreational means, why is snow so important for the valley?

We all are well aware of the fact that the Kashmir Valley suffers a lot in this and that way. The government sector cannot generate employment for every individual, and the private sector is not so developed that every individual

may get a job and earn their livelihood.

The people of Kashmir are hard-working and have great farming skills. The agriculture sector and horticulture provide chances to the unemployed people of Kashmir to get employment.

Snow retains the moisture of the soil and provides the water to the irrigation canal that the farmers grow paddy fields, vegetables, fruits, etc.

Kashmir Valley has its unique fame and charm in all corners of the world and has great and historic tourist destinations, rivers, and lofty mountains of the Pir Panjal range.

This is very fortunate, and the upper reaches and some plains of the valley received the season's first snowfall on the 11th of December 2024. The night temperature rose in the Kashmir Valley due to cloud cover, and the summer capital has yet to receive snowfall.

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Chief Justice e-inaugurates new building of DCC Kupwara

■ HT News Network

KUPWARA, FEBRUARY 27: Chief Justice High Court of Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh, Tashi Rabstan, today e-inaugurated the state-of-the-art new building for District Court Complex in Kupwara.

This landmark development marks a significant milestone in the judicial infrastructure of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh, aimed at improving access to justice for citizens in the region. The inaugural ceremony was, among others, attended by Administrative Judge for District Kupwara, Justice Wasim Sadiq Nargal; Principal District & Sessions Judge, Shazia Tabasum; Deputy Commissioner, Ayushi Sudan; Additional District Judge Kupwara,

Khem Raj Sharma; Additional District Judge Handwara, Umi Kulsoom; SSP Kupwara, Gulam Jeelani besides Judicial Officers, members of Bar Association and court staff.

The newly constructed court building, designed with modern amenities, aims to enhance the working environment for the judicial officers, lawyers and staff while ensuring a more accessible and efficient system for the litigants. It also highlights the government's commitment towards strengthening the judiciary system and providing facilities that promote transparency and quick resolution of legal matters.

During the inaugural ceremony, the Chief Justice expressed satisfaction over timely completion of the project and emphasized the importance of modern infrastructure for the judicial system. He said that it is not merely a physical



structure but a commitment for providing access to justice to all citizens. He also highlighted the importance of digital integration in the judiciary and assured that similar

initiatives would continue to be implemented across the region to further improve judicial services.

The Chief Justice expressed gratitude towards all stakeholders including officers from judiciary, executing agency and civil administration for ensuring timely completion of the building.

In his address, Justice Wasim Sadiq Nargal said that this day marks the importance of courts as the new court building will house the administration for ensuring justice to all citizens especially underprivileged people. He hoped that the well designed new court building with state of the art facilities will fulfill the needs of all stakeholders including the judiciary and the citizens.

Principal District & Sessions

Judge also spoke and expressed her gratitude to all stakeholders especially court administration for their efforts for completion of the court complex building which will strengthen the roots of the judiciary and justice delivery.

DC Kupwara, in her speech, thanked all the stakeholders who ensured timely completion of the building and hoped that the new building will further facilitate the Judicial Officers and Court staff in better delivery of the services to the people.

The inauguration of the Kupwara court building is part of a larger initiative to modernize and expand judicial facilities in Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh, ensuring that justice remains accessible and efficient for every citizen.

Dy CM launches work on Chewdara Beerwah Bridge

Reaffirms Govt's commitment towards holistic, sustained development of J&K

■ HT News Network

BEERWAH, FEBRUARY 27: Deputy Chief Minister, Surinder Chaudhary, today launched work on Chewdara Beerwah bridge being constructed at an estimated cost of Rs 14.15 crore.

The project, being executed under NABARD, will cater to a large chunk of commuters and general public as well, augmenting the connectivity in the area to great extent.

MLA Chadoora, Ali Mohammad Dar; MLA Beerwah, Dr. Shafi Ahmad Wani; MLA Khanshaib, Saifud Din Bhat; DC Budgam; Chief Engineer R&B; concerned district officers



and eminent citizens of Beerwah attended the event.

While speaking on the occasion, the Deputy Chief Minister said that the government is committed to holistic and sustained development of Jammu

and Kashmir. He said that a new era of progress and prosperity has been ushered in the region with tremendous development in every nook and corner of the UT.

The Deputy Chief Minister directed the executing

agencies to address the challenges impeding the project's advancement.

"Work should be completed within the stipulated time so that cost escalation does not take place and the vital project is dedicated to the people in time", the Deputy Chief Minister maintained and directed for a synergetic approach to remove bottlenecks, if any.

Later, the Deputy Chief Minister interacted with several deputations at Town hall and reiterated the Government's commitment towards speedy development besides prompt public service delivery and redressal of grievances.

CUKashmir VC distributes offer letters

Ganderbal, Feb 27: The Central Placement and Career Planning Cell, Central University of Kashmir (CUKashmir) organized a felicitation ceremony to celebrate the successful placement of MBA students in HDFC Bank as Executive Trainees with a lucrative salary package.

Vice-Chancellor, Prof. A. Ravinder Nath, distributed the offer letters among the selected students and congratulated them on this remarkable achievement. Addressing the gathering, CUKashmir VC emphasized the importance of professionalism and integrity, urging the students to act as ambassadors of the university in their new roles. He also encouraged them to guide their batchmates and juniors in preparing for similar opportunities.

He further directed the Placement Cell to expand its industry collaborations and explore placement opportunities with other leading corporate firms across the country.

Dean Academic Affairs, Prof. Shahid Rasool, commended the students for their hard work and dedication. He advised them to work with zeal and enthusiasm while staying connected with the university for continuous learning and professional growth.

Rana holds public outreach camp at Mankote; inaugurates Water Supply Schemes

■ HT News Network

POONCH, FEBRUARY 27: Minister for Jal Shakti, Javed Ahmed Rana, on Thursday inaugurated two Water Supply Schemes (WSSs) at Barooi Chowki and Sheikhna Barja in Mankote block, Poonch.

These WSSs have been completed at a cost of Rs 3.85 crore and Rs 2.82 crore respectively, as part of Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM).

The schemes were inaugurated during a mega public outreach camp held at Mankote which aimed to address the issues and grievances of the local population.

Scores of delegations and individuals called on the Minister during the camp with their grievances while seeking speedy redressal.

Deputy Commissioner, Poonch, Vikas Kundal, along with HoDs and senior officers from various departments of the district were present during the outreach camp.

Addressing on the occasion, Javed Rana said that water security is one of the prime objectives of the government. "We are fully committed to ensure that adequate, quality drinking water reaches to every household and significant focus is being laid on augmentation of water infrastructure facilities across Jammu and Kashmir," asserted the Minister.

The Minister said that with the inauguration of these schemes, much of the water problems of the locality will be solved.

The WSS Barooi Chowki will benefit a population of 2,948, covering 440 households with installation of 140 new connections while the WSS Sheikhna Barja Mankote will serve



a population of 3,991, providing water access to 611 households.

Javed Rana exhorted upon the people to supplement government's efforts in realising the vision of holistic development besides working for protection and preservation of water resources. "It is the responsibility of every individual to ensure that our water sources are clean and safe," he added.

While commenting on the outreach camp, Rana said that it is a good concept prevalent in other parts of the country also, but it needs few modifications to achieve tangible results. "The main aim of the outreach programme should be to provide on spot sustainable solutions to the issues faced by the public. We are taking governance to the doorsteps of people and we will be guided by our unwavering commitment to serve the public," he reiterated.

He said that the outreach camps should be a regular feature so that the plans and policies are prioritised accordingly. "If public darbar is conducted with transparency and commitment and followed with actions, most of the developmental problems will be solved," he said. He also praised the local administration for the work done during the last few months.

Despite the inclement weather, the Minister continued with the outreach programme and held detailed interactions with the locals, listened to their concerns and reviewed developmental works.

He gave a patient hearing to the issues raised and said that specific directions have been passed to the concerned officers for their resolution.

Stressing accountability, Rana called upon the district administration Poonch for active monitoring of all developmental activities to maximize their impact on public welfare. He further emphasised the need to enhance performance across sectors, address gaps, expedite project execution and achieve tangible outcomes that directly benefit the residents.

Public Notice

My Son's name has been wrongly written as MOHAMMAD ZIYAAN in his Adhar card while his correct name is ZEEYAN NABI S/O GH NABI CHOPAN R/O NOWPORA JAGIR which needs to be corrected if anybody having any objection in this regard he/she may file his/her objection in the office of BDO WAGOORA / TEHSIL OFFICE WAGOORA within Seven days from the publication of this notice after that no objection will be entertained

Name....GH NABI CHOPAN
F/O ZEEYAN NABI
R/O NOWPORA JAGIR TEHSIL ...WAGOORA

Public Notice

This is for the information of the general public that i have correction in name of my bank passbook now I want to change this correction as per my adhaar card I want change my name from shama afroz to shameema begum. If any body has any objection regarding this please contact jkbank singpora within 7 days no objection accepted after the stipulated time period.

NAME, SHAMEEMA BEGUM
W/O. GHULAM HASSAN BHAT
R/O RAKHI DUSLIPORA

PUBLIC NOTICE

My name has been wrongly written as CHEENA BANO D/O KARAMAT ALI R/O CHADEYA MANCHIKRAT while my correct name is AFREENA BEGUM D/O KARAMAT ALI R/O CHADEYA MANCHIKRAT which needs to be corrected if anybody having antly objection in this regard he / she may contact with office of the GOVT MIDDLE SCHOOL CHADAN MANCHIKRAT within seven days from the publication of this notice after that no objection will be entertained

Name.....AFREENA BEGUM.
D/O KARAMAT ALI
R/O CHADEYA MANCHIKRAT
TEHSIL....URI
DISTT....BARAMULLA

Public Notice

My name has been wrongly written as AB HAMID GANAI in my adhar card while my correct name is AB HAMID GANIE which needs to be corrected if anybody having any objection in this regard he/she may file his/her objection in the office of BDO WAGOORA /Tehsil office WAGOORA within seven days from the publication of this notice after that no objection will be entertained

اطلاع عام

ہر خاص عام کو اطلاع دی جاتی ہے کہ بنگ اکوانٹ زیر نمبر 0122040800012209 برانچ پہلگام مین میرا نام سازی جان ادراج ہوئی ہے جبکہ میرا اصلی نام مطابق ادھار کارڈ سازی غنی ہے اب اس کی دستگی کرانی مطوبہ 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 ساز یہ غنی
ساکن کھریو پولو امہ کشمی

Public Notice

Name Correction on Driving licence.

Name on my driving licence has been wrongly recorded as KHALID ASHRAF CHISTI, bearing DL No-JK-0520130037901. Now I intend to Correct my name in the said DL which is KHALID ASHRAF CHISTI S/O MOHD ASHRAF CHISTI

Anybody having any objection in this regard may file his/her objection with ARTO office BARAMULLA/ SRINAGAR within Seven days of the publication of this notice. After the said time period no objection will be entertained by any means.

Name....KHALID ASHRAF CHISTI
S/O MOHD ASHRAF CHISTI
R/O BAGH USMAN II GULAB BAGH SRINAGAR

GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU AND KASHMIR
Public Works Department (R&B)
Office of the Executive Engineer, PWD (R&B) Mechanical Division South Kashmir

NOTICE INVITING E-TENDERS
eNIT No: 24/ R&B/MDSK /2024-25 Dated: 25-02-2025

For and on behalf of the Lt. Governor of Jammu and Kashmir UT, e-tenders, valid for 180 days, are invited from original equipment manufacturers/Experienced firms in children playing equipment/Fountain Installations for the below mentioned work:-
Intending Authority: Chief Executive Officer MC Kulgam Accord of Administrative Approval: AAA vide Order no: MC/KGM/Works/74 of 2024, Dated 05-08-2024 Technical Sanction: TS No: EE/Mech/R&B/TS/14 of 2024-2025 Dated: 24-02-25 The critical dates for the tendering process are:

Name of Work	Estimated Cost (Rs. in Lacs)	Cost of Tender Document (In INR)	Time of completion	Earnest Money (in INR)	Position of Funds
Installation of Children Playing Equipment/Fountain at Women's /Children Park Kulgam (Balance Work).	20.26/-	800/-	45 Days	40520/-	Available with intending Department

All other details/eligibility criteria and terms and conditions can be downloaded from the website jktenders.gov.in . and Queries if any may be made by email at xennbmdsk@gmail.com and should be made by or before 10/03/2025. The bidders are required to submit their offers online in two (02) covers Cover-I will contain: Scanned copies of following documents:

1. Date of Publicity on website	25-02-2025
2. Downloading of tender documents, start date	25-02-2025
3. Bid submission start date & Time	25-02-2025 (04:00 PM)
4. Bid submission end date & Time	17-03-2025 (02:00 PM)
5. Opening of tender (Technical bid)	18-03-2025 (12:00 PM)
6. Opening of tender (Financial bid)	To be notified separately

1. Cost of Tender document in shape of challan through J&K Govt. Treasury indicating Treasury Voucher No. & date (between the date of start of bid and bid submission end date) and also indicating NIT Number, Name of work duly crediting to 0059-PWD (Revenue) in favour of Executive Engineer (R&B) Mechanical Division South Kashmir (Tender Inviting Authority) and uploading a copy of treasury challan / receipt on e-tendering portal.

The bidder may deposit tender fee in the shape of e-Challan through Account no. 0014010200000198 in the name of Executive Engineer (R&B) Mechanical Division South Kashmir. Name of Bank: Jammu & Kashmir Bank. Branch Name:- TP Anantnag IFSC JAKA0EMPIRE Earnest money deposit in shape of CDR/FDR pledged in the name of Executive Engineer (R&B) Mechanical Division South Kashmir from any nationalized/scheduled bank having a branch in Anantnag with No. & date (between the date of start of bid and bid submission end date).

DIPK-12484/24
Date: Feb 27, 2025

Sd/
Executive Engineer,
(R&B) Mechanical Division,
South Kashmir

Combating Drug Menace: Distt Admin Kulgam organizes Orientation program for religious leaders

Religious leaders play vital role in raising awareness & combating drug menace: DC

■ **Farooq Rather**

KULGAM, FEBRUARY 27: Under Nasha Mukta Bharat campaign, the District Administration Kulgam today organized an orientation programme on combating drug menace for religious leaders here at conference hall of mini-secretariat Kulgam under the theme 'Khushal Kulgam.'

The programme was attended by ADC, Viqar Ahmad Giri; ACR, ACP, DSWO, Resource Persons from Health,

Drug Controller, Excise and Taxation, Police and DAC besides a large number of religious leaders from different areas of the district.

Speaking on the occasion, Deputy Commissioner (DC) Kulgam, Athar Aamir Khan said that religious leaders play a vital role in raising awareness vis-a-vis combating drug menace.

He underscored the significance of a collective fight by all stakeholders to make Kulgam a drug-free district and urged all sections of society



to join hands in this fight.

The DC also highlighted various initiatives taken by the District Administration to curb drug abuse which include massive awareness campaigns and intensive drives to destroy poppy and bung cultivation across the district besides strict action against those involved in drug peddling.

He advocated supporting the victims and working for their rehabilitation, rather than stigmatizing them. The programme witnessed active

participation from religious leaders and other key stakeholders, who expressed their support in spreading awareness and guiding the youth towards a drug-free future.

Meanwhile, the District Administration is going to organize more orientation programmes under the theme 'Khushal Kulgam' with the objective to reach out different sections and stakeholders of the society to spread awareness about substance abuse, and to take this fight to its conclusion to make Kulgam drug free.

Free Screening Camp for Cleft Lip & Palate Patients organized at Distt Hospital B'pora

■ **HT News Network**

BANDIPORA, FEBRUARY 27: A free awareness and screening camp for patients with cleft lip, cleft palate, nasal, facial and cranial deformities was today organized at District Hospital Bandipora.

The initiative aimed to identify and support individuals in need of corrective surgery and medical treatment, ensuring that patients, especially children, get access to life-changing healthcare services.

A large number of patients from Bandipora and surrounding areas attended the camp, where they received free medical consultations, screenings, and expert guidance on further treatment.

The camp was conducted by Smile Train India, in



collaboration with the Chief Medical Officer (CMO) Bandipora and District Early Intervention Centre District Hospital Bandipora.

Doctors and healthcare

professionals conducted detailed examinations and provided counseling to patients and their families. Those in need of surgical intervention were enrolled for free treatment under

Smile Train India's cleft care program. The initiative is expected to bring hope and improved quality of life to many individuals affected by cleft conditions.

Families who attended the camp appreciated the efforts of the organizers, stating that such initiatives are crucial in providing accessible healthcare to underprivileged patients. BANDIPORA, FEBRUARY 27: A free awareness and screening camp for patients with cleft lip, cleft palate, nasal, facial and cranial deformities was today organized at District Hospital Bandipora.

The initiative aimed to identify and support individuals in need of corrective surgery and medical treatment, ensuring that patients, especially children, get access to life-changing healthcare services.

DC Bandipora inspects restoration work on road collapse site in Hajin

Visits Temporary Accommodation for evacuated families

■ **HT News Network**

BANDIPORA, FEBRUARY 27: The Deputy Commissioner (DC) Bandipora, Manzoor Ahmad Qadri on Thursday visited the Hajin town to inspect the restoration work on the road that had recently collapsed after developing cracks.

During the visit, the DC assessed the progress of the restoration work, which is being carried out by the Department of Irrigation and Flood Control, to ensure the quick re-establishment of the road.

Emphasizing the urgency and importance of the road, DC urged the concerned departments to complete the repairs at the earliest to minimize any further inconvenience to



the local population.

During the visit, Qadri also visited the temporary accommodation facilities provided to the families evacuated after the road collapse.

Pertinent to mention

that the families living adjacent to Jehlum near the road collapse site have been temporarily relocated to safer locations until the restoration work is completed. The DC interacted with the evacuated fami-

lies, assuring them that every effort is being made to ensure their safety and well-being.

Speaking on the occasion, DC said that the Administration is closely monitoring the progress to minimise the impact of the road collapse and ensure the restoration process is carried out efficiently and promptly.

The DC also directed the concerned authorities to continue providing assistance to the evacuated families, ensuring that their basic needs, including shelter, food, and other essentials are being met.

During the visit, the DC was accompanied by ADC Zaffar Hussain Shawl, Executive Engineer I&FC Sumbal, SDPO Sumbal and other concerned.

IUST Organizes Two-Day Eye Screening and Awareness Camp

■ **HT News Network**

Awantipora, Feb. 27: The Islamic University of Science and Technology (IUST), in collaboration with Kashmir Eye Hospitals, inaugurated a two-day Eye Screening and Awareness Camp at the IUST campus today. The camp, coordinated by Dr. Zahida Rasool, Medical Officer IUST, witnessed participation from students, faculty, non-teaching staff, and local residents. Senior Ophthalmologist Dr. Imtiyaz Ahmed, and his team provided attendees

with basic eye screenings and consultations. Speaking on the occasion, Prof. Abdul Wahid Makhdoom Registrar IUST said that such camps are important towards promoting a culture of preventive healthcare and ensuring that our students and staff take proactive steps for their well-being. The camp aimed at the early detection of eye diseases, monitoring vision changes, protecting against digital eye strain, assessing eye coordination, and screening for age-related eye changes. The initiative provided valuable insights into maintaining eye health and emphasized the importance of preventive care. About 200 students and staff were tested on the first day, and the screenings will continue tomorrow as well.

Food Safety team Shopian intensifies market checking at Zainapora

■ **HT News Network**

SHOPIAN, FEBRUARY 27: A team of Food Safety officials from the Drug and Food Control Organization led by Assistant Commissioner, Food Safety, Shopian conducted an intensive inspection drive at Zainapora Shopian, today.

The drive was focused on Restaurants, Dhabas, poultry Shops, meat shops, roadside eateries and Kashmiri snack stalls to ensure compliance with the Food Safety and Standards Act, particularly in terms of sanitary and hygienic conditions besides other provisions.

The team inspected various food stalls and vendors, and checked their adherence to proper food handling, storage and good manufacturing practices.

During the drive, some plastic utensils, Newspapers and approximately 20 kg of meat with foul smell emanating from it were destroyed on the spot. Six FBOs were booked under different provisions of Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006 Rules and Regulations 2011.

Restaurants, Dhabas, poultry and roadside vendors were educated on the importance of maintaining hygiene and sanitary standards. They were also instructed to take measures to protect prepared food from environmental hazards and rodents.

Furthermore, food business operators involved in the preparation of ready-to-eat food were directed to undergo pest control measures at their premises.

A prestigious ceremony was held in the honor of renowned broadcaster Maqsood Ahmed.

■ **Farooq Rather.**

Srinagar: 27 February, the Shaherbeen team organized a grand function in Srinagar in the honor of Maqsood Ahmed, the renowned broadcaster of the valley and patron of Shaherbeen. The program was attended by representatives of Shaherbeen from all districts of Jammu and Kashmir. All the representatives in the program praised Maqsood Ahmed for his integrity, personality, competence, philanthropy, and good feelings. The representatives praised him for his services. He was thanked in strong words for leading the way. Many representatives were also emotional and sentimental. The event was held in a private hotel in Srinagar. The program was attended by renowned broadcaster Ashfaq



Lone, Paramjit Singh Ji and rep-

resentatives from all districts.

DC Kupwara chairs Rent Assessment Committee meeting

■ **HT News Network**

KUPWARA, FEBRUARY 27: In order to finalize various Rent Assessment Cases of the buildings which are under the utilization of different Government Departments, a meeting of the District Rent Assessment Committee (DRAC) was held under the chairpersonship of Deputy Commissioner (DC) Kupwara, Ayushi Sudan here.

As many as 42 rent cases of buildings presently housed by various Government Departments in the district were put forth before the Committee for fixing of monthly rent. The Committee deliberated on all the rent assessment cases in detail, and each case was examined thoroughly keeping in view various administrative and other requirements.

Out of the total 42 cases, 37 cases were approved while 5 were

deferred due to absence of concerned stakeholders.

On the occasion, the DC impressed upon the Officers to ensure that vacant government buildings are occupied for official purposes and rented accommodation remains the last option.

She emphasized that government buildings should be constructed by concerned departments on priority.

The meeting was attended by ACD, CEO, CMO, CPO, DSWO, Executive Engineers and other concerned officers. As many as 42 rent cases of buildings presently housed by various Government Departments in the district were put forth before the Committee for fixing of monthly rent.

The Committee deliberated on all the rent assessment cases in detail, and each case was examined thoroughly keeping in view various administrative and other requirements.

ICSSR-sponsored study on JKRLM unveiled at CUKashmir

■ **HT News Network**

Ganderbal, Feb 27: Central University of Kashmir (CUKashmir) organized a programme to disseminate among various stakeholders the outcome of the research study on Jammu & Kashmir Rural Livelihood Mission under Deendayal Antyodaya Yojna : Evaluation of UMEED and Startup Village Entrepreneurship Programme sponsored by the Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR) at varsity's Green Campus here on Thursday. The study has been conducted in all the blocks of district Ganderbal Kashmir.

The event brought together policymakers, financial institutions, academicians and the representatives from civil society to discuss the impact and future direction of these initiatives.

While inaugurating the event, the Vice-Chancellor, Prof. A Ravinder Nath, emphasized the transformative potential of the



Startup Village Entrepreneurship Programme (SVEP) in fostering rural sustainable livelihood generation. "The ongoing evaluation of UMEED-SVEP in Ganderbal has yielded valuable insights into its successes, challenges, and areas needing further refinement. These findings provide a solid foundation for future policy enhancements and stakeholder collabor-

ation," he stated. Delivering the presentation, Project Director and Dean, School of Business Studies, Prof. Fayaz Ahmad Nika, highlighted the socio-economic empowerment of rural women as one of the programme's most significant achievements. "Through UMEED-SVEP, many Self-Help Group (SHG) members have evolved into successful entrepre-

neurs, enhancing their financial independence and societal standing. The increase in income levels has translated into better education and healthcare access for their families," he noted. Prof. Nikka also underscored the pivotal role of financial institutions in enabling rural entrepreneurship. "While banks and microfinance institutions have been instrumental in providing credit access, the debt servicing by the beneficiaries still remains a challenge. Simplified lending mechanisms and enhanced financial literacy are essential to overcome these barriers," he added. He thanked the ICSSR, University administration and the J&K Mission Directorate for extending support and cooperation in making the study objective and result oriented. Former Dean, University of Kashmir, Prof. Nissar Ali, urged graduates to shift their focus from job seeking to job creation. "In an era of rising unemployment, self-reliance through entrepreneurship is the way forward.

DC Shopian reviews arrangements for the holy month of Ramadan

■ HT News Network

SHOPIAN, FEBRUARY 27: The Deputy Commissioner (DC) Shopian, Shishir Gupta today chaired a meeting to review the arrangements for the holy month of Ramadan.

The DC directed KPDCL functionaries to ensure uninterrupted power supplies especially during Iftar and Sehri times, also emphasising Jal Shakti department to provide potable water to the public.

To regulate market practices as per the standards, the DC instructed Officers to intensify the joint market checking by teams already in action and take strict penal measures against violations of over pricing, illegal practices and non compliance to rules.

Furthermore, the DC stressed the importance of sanitation and cleanliness at places of worship and congregation sites.

The Municipal Council, Shopian was directed to take immediate mea-



sures to maintain hygienic conditions and remove encroachment on road and pavements across the market places throughout the holy month.

The meeting was attended by ADDC Shopian, Dr. Nasir Ahmad Lone; ADC Shopian Dr. Zakir Hussain Faaz; ACR, DIO, Ex. Engineer Jal Shakti (PHE), CMO, CAO, DSHO and other representatives of Revenue, KPDCL, MC etc. The Deputy Commissioner (DC)

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Poonch Administration promotes Water Conservation through Watershed Yatra DC flags off awareness campaign

■ HT News Network

POONCH, FEBRUARY 27: In a significant move towards enhancing water conservation efforts, Deputy Commissioner Poonch, Vikas Kundal, today flagged off the Watershed Yatra, here from the DC Office Complex. The initiative aims to foster community participation and raise awareness about watershed development activities across the region.

The yatra traversed various routes within Poonch city, culminating at Government High School Kulani, where an awareness program was presided over by DDC Chairperson Tazeem Akhtar.



The event commenced with the National Anthem, followed by a water conservation pledge taken by participants, including students, civil society members, and community leaders, committing to conserve water. Project Manager IWMP Naeem ul Nisa Bhatti, emphasized the critical role of community involvement in the success of

watershed programs. She highlighted that such initiatives are vital for mitigating climate change impacts, enhancing agricultural resilience and ensuring the sustainability of water resources. Addressing the gathering, DDC Chairperson reiterated the importance of watershed management in boosting rural livelihoods and long-term

water sustainability. She encouraged local communities to adopt sustainable practices like rainwater harvesting and efficient irrigation systems to combat climate change effects. Other speakers reiterated the urgent need to conserve water for future generation and stressed the integration of watershed development activities into broader development schemes. The program also featured a cultural performance by localsingers, Bhoomi Pooja, plantation drive and the inauguration of various construction works, marking a comprehensive approach to community engagement and environmental stewardship.

Awareness program on New Criminal Laws held at Achabal Anantnag

■ HT News Network

ANANTNAG, FEBRUARY 27: An awareness programme on the three newly introduced criminal laws viz. Bharatiya Nyay Sanhita, Bharatiya Nagrik Suraksha Sanhita, and Bharatiya Sakshya Adhiniyam was today held at Town Hall Achabal, Anantnag. The programme, presided over by the Deputy Commissioner (DC) Anantnag, Syeed Fakhrudin Hamid aimed to raise awareness about the three laws and to educate the people. District and sectoral officers from administration including Assistant Commissioner Development Anantnag and Superintendent of Police (Operations) Anantnag were present on the occasion among others. In his remarks, the DC noted that the new laws are justice-oriented and victim-centric. He said that in the new laws, priority is given to justice instead of punishment besides ensuring speedy trials and speedy justice. He also said that priority in the new laws is to tackle crimes against women and children.

Hamid further added that these laws have incorporated recent technological developments also.



The program included a series of presentations by legal experts who detailed the key aspects of the new criminal laws, including victim protection measures, reporting procedures, and the rights of the accused. The event also featured a Q&A session, giving attendees the chance to engage directly with experts and gain a better understanding of the laws that directly affect them. The public response to the awareness program was positive, with many expressing their appreciation for the opportunity to learn about the new legal changes. The participants also emphasized that such initiatives empower citizens with the knowledge to protect their rights.

Sahitya Academy, Distt Admin Kulgam organize Symposium on eminent Poet ‘Khazir Malik Safaie’

■ Farooq Rather

KULGAM, FEBRUARY 27: The Sahitya Academy in collaboration with District Administration Kulgam today organized a day-long symposium at conference hall of mini-secretariat here, to honor the eminent Kashmiri Poet, Khazir Malik Safaie of Pahlloo Kulgam.

The event featured two sessions dedicated to exploring his contributions to Kashmiri language and Sufi Poetry.

Scholars and writers from various regions gathered to discuss Safaie's extensive work in the field of linguistics, particularly his efforts in promoting Kashmiri language, tradition and Sufi poetry.

The symposium provided a platform for in-depth discussions on his writing, poetry and the lasting impact of his work on Kashmiri language and society.

On the occasion the audience



read the couplets of Khazir Malik Safaie's poetry from his collections including 'Sikandar Naama', 'Molivi Naama', 'Bagi Shoda' and 'Toti Naama'.

On the occasion, the Deputy Commissioner (DC) Kulgam, Athar Aamir Khan who was the chief guest appreciated the efforts of

Sahitya Akademi for organizing such programs to honor the local Kashmiri poets.

He added that translation of all the famous literature of the world should be available in Kashmiri language so that the audience and reach of Kashmiri language will rise to its new horizons.

In his keynote address, the Convener Kashmiri Advisory Board Sahitya Akademi Prof Shaad Ramzan gave a detailed account on the poetry of Khazir Malik Safaie.

It is worth mentioning that Safaie remained in oblivion for centuries until in 1980's when the Cultural Academy did a detailed research on him supervised by Prof Shaad Ramzan. The presidential address was given by Manshoor Banhali who appreciated the efforts of Shaad Ramzan to discover this eminent poet after a long time. The vote of thanks was given by ADC, Viqar Ahmed Gili who expressed gratitude to the audience and Sahitya academy for organizing such a symposium on eminent Kashmiri local poet.

The programme was also attended by ACR, ACP, Tehsildar Kulgam, and civil society members, local poets, writers and some relatives/ residents of poet's native village Pahlloo.

Baramulla Police Provide Assistance to Vehicles Stuck in Snow on Tappar-Kreeri Road

■ Aashiq Hussain

Kreeri, 27 Feb (HT) In the wake of fresh snowfall affecting most parts of the Kashmir Valley, Baramulla Police have extended their support to private and passenger vehicles that became stranded on the Tappar-Kreeri Main Road on Thursday.

With the region experiencing heavy snow accumulation, several vehicles got stuck along the road, creating travel disruptions for the locals and passengers. The police team from Kreeri Police Station, understanding the urgency of the situation, swiftly mobilized and responded to the stranded vehicles. The police worked



diligently and ensuring that all vehicles were safely assisted.

The dedicated police team has remained on alert throughout the day, providing the necessary support, including helping stranded drivers, guiding vehicles through

the snow-covered roads, and ensuring safe passage. In addition to assisting drivers, the police have been vigilant in maintaining public safety during these adverse weather conditions

In light of the ongoing snowfall

and the challenges it poses for road users, Jammu and Kashmir Police have requested the general public to exercise caution while traveling. They urged motorists to avoid unnecessary travel during severe weather, drive cautiously, and ensure their vehicles are adequately prepared for snow-covered roads. The police also emphasized the importance of staying informed about road conditions and following any traffic advisories issued to ensure the safety of all travelers. As the situation continues to evolve with the weather conditions, the police remain committed to providing assistance and ensuring the safety and well-being of the public.

MLA Sonawari visits Hajin, assesses Road Collapse Situation

■ HT News Network

BANDIPORA, FEBRUARY 27: Member of the Legislative Assembly (MLA) for Sonawari Constituency, Advocate Hilal Akbar Lone today visited Hajin area to take stock of the situation following the collapse of a road due to cracks that developed near Sheikh Mohalla.

The MLA met local residents to take first hand appraisal of their concerns and assured them of prompt action.

During his visit, Lone assured the public that, once the weather conditions improve, work on the road project will resume on a war footing basis.

Meanwhile, temporary measures are being implemented to prevent further deterioration of the road.

MLA emphasized that the authorities are fully aware of the issue, and efforts



are underway to provide relief to those affected. He said the matter has been taken up with the concerned authorities, and assured the people that rehabilitation efforts will be carried out wherever possible. In addition to inspecting the situation in Hajin, MLA also visited Receiving Station Nadihal, Gujjarpati Aragam, Chanpal, Chapran and other adjacent areas to take stock of the situation amid incessant rains.

SBI RSETI Ramban organises awareness Camp themed ‘Financial Literacy: Women’s Prosperity’

■ HT News Network

RAMBAN, FEBRUARY 27: SBI Rural Self Employment Training Institute (RSETI) Ramban organized an awareness Camp here today, focusing on the theme 'Financial Literacy: Women's Prosperity'. The event aimed to empower women and the local community with essential financial knowledge and creating awareness about the risks of cyber frauds.

The program was attended by Branch Manager SBI, Sachin Kumar, as the Chief Guest. In his address, the Branch Manager emphasized the importance of financial independence for women, encouraging them to

actively participate in banking services, savings, investments and entrepreneurship. He also spoke about various financial products and government schemes available to support women in their economic growth.

Director, RSETI S. Harvinder Singh, conducted an insightful awareness session on financial management, digital banking, and cyber fraud prevention. He educated participants on the risks of phishing, OTP frauds, UPI scams, and fake calls, advising them on how to safeguard their financial assets and personal information in the digital era.

The camp witnessed active participation from women entrepreneurs, self-help group members and



aspiring businesswomen, who were encouraged to utilize financial services effectively for economic self-reliance. Discussions were held on topics including Importance of Savings & Investments, Digital Banking & Secure Online Transactions, Government Loan Schemes for Women (PMEGP, Mudra Yojana, HADP, etc.) and Cyber Security Measures & Fraud Prevention

The interactive session allowed participants to ask questions and clarify doubts about banking security, business loans, and digital payments. The experts provided practical tips and guidance on financial planning, securing small business loans, and leveraging government schemes for self-employment opportunities.

schemes for self-employment opportunities.

Participants expressed gratitude for the informative session and pledged to implement financial awareness in their daily lives. The interactive session allowed participants to ask questions and clarify doubts about banking security, business loans, and digital payments. The experts provided practical tips and guidance on financial planning, securing small business loans, and leveraging government schemes for self-employment opportunities.

Participants expressed gratitude for the informative session and pledged to implement financial awareness in their daily lives.

DC Kishtwar reviews Power Projects Catchment Area Development Plan

■ HT News Network

KISHTWAR, FEBRUARY 27: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Kishtwar, Rajesh Kumar Shavan today convened a meeting to review the progress achieved under the Holistic Agriculture Development Programme (HADP) in the district. Nodal Officer HADP (Chief Agriculture Officer), Amjad Hussain Malik presented an in-depth report on the programme's implementation.

He informed that a total of 19,760 applications seeking schemes benefits have been received across agriculture and allied sectors. "Of these, 14,484 applications were approved, including 10,616 in Agriculture, 1,052 in Horticulture, 1,870 in Animal Husbandry, 717 in Sheep Husbandry, 207 in Sericulture, 19 in Fisheries, and 3 in the Marketing sector, by the District Level Committee (DLC)" he added. During the review, the DC emphasized



the significance of enhancing registration of eligible persons across the district. He directed field officers to intensify efforts to broadbase the scheme outreach.

The review also included an assessment of the physical and financial progress in key sectors, including Horticulture, Fish-

eries, Sheep Husbandry, and Animal Husbandry.

The DC further set new targets for the stakeholder departments, urging them to ensure continued progress in the saturation of the program and to achieve top rankings in the Union Territory (UT).

The DC also set the target of 2,500 registrations on the Daksh Kisan Portal and 8,000 on the Kisan Sathi Portal. Other targets included addition of more farms to the KKG app.

The review meeting was attended by CPO Shahnawaz Bali; Chief Horticulture Officer Sajid Mustafa; District Sheep Husbandary Officer, LDM, DAO, DDM NABARD, Area Marketing Officer and other officials from the agriculture and allied sectors.

NO: PR/DDI/J/5140// SBI RSETI Ramban organises awareness Camp themed 'Financial Literacy: Women's Prosperity'

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The event aimed to empower women and the local community with essential financial knowledge and creating awareness about the risks of cyber frauds.

Special drive conducted in Katra to reinforce compliance with MV Act

■ HT News Network

KATRA, FEBRUARY 27: A special enforcement drive was conducted today at Katra under the directions of Transport Commissioner Vishesh Mahajan and under the guidance of Regional Transport Officer Pankaj Bhagotra to curb violations of the Motor Vehicles Act (MV Act) and associated rules. The focus of the drive was on three-wheeler auto-rickshaws, which were found overcharging passengers and indulging in overloading.

The Auto Rickshaw drivers and owners were strictly instructed not to overcharge passengers or overload their vehicles. A meeting was also held with the Auto Rickshaw Union President and Vice President, along with vehicle owners and drivers, at Railway Station Katra, Katra Bus Stand and Banganga Auto Stand.

During the drive, ARTO (Flying Squad) emphasized strict adherence to traffic norms and MV Act rules, including prohibition of overcharging and overloading.

They were asked to follow mandatory wearing of uniforms along with name plates, keep vehicle documents updated, behave properly with passengers, avoid driving under the influence of alcohol or contraband substances. As part of the enforcement, around 400 vehicles were checked, and 33 were e-challaned for various violations, including 15 for overcharging.

Additionally, one vehicle was seized for lacking fitness and kept at Katra Police Station. The expected fine from e-challans amounts to Rs. 46,400.

Transport Commissioner emphasizes transparent services, people friendly measures Pays surprise visit to ARTO office, Reasi

■ HT News Network

REASI, FEBRUARY 27: Transport Commissioner, Vishesh Mahajan, today paid surprise visit to the office of Assistant Regional Transport Officer, Reasi and issued several directives aimed at ensuring deliverance of all services within the notified timelines as outlined under the Public Services Guarantee Act (PSGA). The Commissioner cautioned that any deviation from these standards would lead to severe consequences and the erring officials would be dealt with strictly as per law. He reiterated the department's unwavering commitment towards ensuring added transparency, accountability and public service efficiency. He called for concerted efforts from all stakeholders to elevate the transport infrastructure in the region which is prerequisite to prevent fatal accidents. He underscored the need to identify "hungry routes" where public transportation is severely lacking so that immediate



action is taken in collaboration with the district administration ensuring enhanced connectivity and accessibility for the public. During the visit, the Transport Commissioner also supervised the scheduled driving tests in Reasi and issued strict instructions regarding fair conduct of the trials with zero tolerance against any discrepancy on this account. He stressed that every aspect of the driving test must fully comply with the Central Motor Vehicles Act (CMVA) and all associated regulations. Earlier, during a surprise inspection at the Trial Ground in Samba, the Trans-

port Commissioner found that a Motor Vehicle Inspector (MVI) was conducting the trials without the requisite orders. Taking cognizance of the lapse, the Transport Commissioner swiftly ordered MVI's attachment in his office as a disciplinary measure and also sought explanation from the ARTO Samba. Simultaneously, the enforcement team of the flying squad laid a Naka at Katra to check complaints regarding overcharging by the Auto Rickshaws. The team instructed the Auto drivers to ensure plying of their vehicles on fare meter otherwise strict action would be initiated against the violators which may lead to suspension and cancellation of their Route Permits and Driving Licenses. Simultaneously, the enforcement team of the flying squad laid a Naka at Katra to check complaints regarding overcharging by the Auto Rickshaws. The team instructed the Auto drivers to ensure plying of their vehicles on fare meter otherwise strict action would be initiated against the violators.

Government prioritising JK's economic growth and inclusive development: Ramdas Athawale

MoS conducts review meeting with Social Welfare Department of Jammu Kashmir

■ HT News Network

Jammu, February 27, 2025: The Minister of State for Social Justice and Empowerment Sh. Ramdas Athawale Thursday highlighted the role of the union government in ensuring inclusive development in the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir. In a review meeting with the Department of Social Welfare Jammu and Kashmir the minister took stock of the implementation and outlined the benefits of various welfare initiatives of the Government of India.

In his speech, Athawale highlighted several key initiatives, including Jan Dhan Yojna, Ujjwala Yojana, Mudra Yojna, PM Awas Yojna among others. The Minister was apprised that, as per the Jan Dhan Yojna, 54.8 crore accounts have been opened in the country with 28 lakh accounts opened in Jammu and Kashmir, empowering citizens with access to banking services. He was further informed that 4.7 lakh LPG connections were provided in the Jammu division as per the Ujjwala Yojna.

He said that 51.9 crore beneficiaries were provided loans under Mudra Yojana in the country with 1.4 lakh in Jammu Kashmir. He informed that about 90.5 lakh houses were constructed under the PM Awas Yojna at the cost of 167881 crore rupees including 2.5 lakh houses in Jammu. The minister added that pan India 8.2 crore people benefited from Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (Ayush Bharat Yojana) and under the Ujala Scheme 36.8 crore led bulbs were provided to beneficiaries from 2015-2025.

During the meeting, the minister informed that the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment will broaden its ambit in the Union Territory so that more and more people are benefited by the government welfare initiatives.

The MoS was also apprised about the progress in Nasha Mukht Bharat Abhiyaan, noting the successful completion of 646 awareness activities in Jammu with participation from over 10.5 lakh people. The Minister assured



that more drug de-addiction centers would be established, with plans for additional centers in Udhampur, Reasi and Ramban. Further highlighting the government's focus on the elderly, Athawale emphasized that Social Justice Ministry is taking active role in the establishment of old age homes and daycare facilities in the region. He said that an old age home in every district and an additional one on the way will provide vital support for the elderly in Jammu and Kashmir.

The Minister also highlighted the ongoing efforts to empower the Divyangjan (differently-abled individuals), ensuring that their needs are met with adequate facilities and provisions. The Minister said that the government is committed to upholding the honour and self-respect

of Divyang people adding that many policies and initiatives are implemented by the Modi government aiming at improving the lives of Divyangjan. He reiterated that the Ministry of State for Social Justice & Empowerment is always ready to provide services to all divyangjan and the senior citizens. He said that 2300 old age homes costing 407 crore rupees have been constructed across the country including in Jammu and Kashmir.

The minister highlighted that the government is prioritizing the region's economic growth and inclusive development by introducing various welfare initiatives from time to time. He informed that in the Union Budget 2025, more funds have been allocated for Centrally-sponsored schemes for their effective implementation

Speaker condoles demise of Dr Sibtain Masoodi

■ HT News Network

JAMMU, FEBRUARY 27: Speaker, Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly, Advocate Abdul Rahim Rather, has expressed profound grief and sorrow over the demise of Dr. Sibtain Masoodi, brother of MLA Pampore, Justice (Retired) Hasnain Masoodi.

In his condolence message, the Speaker expressed deep sympathies with the MLA and prayed for eternal peace to the departed soul and forbearance for the family to bear this irreparable loss.

Sakeena Itoo condoles demise of Dr Sibtain Masoodi

■ HT News Network

JAMMU, FEBRUARY 27: Minister for Health and Medical Education, Social Welfare and Education, Sakeena Itoo, has deeply condoled the demise of Dr. Sibtain Masoodi, brother of her colleague and MLA Pampore, Justice (Retired) Hasnain Masoodi.

In her condolence message, Sakeena conveyed heartfelt sympathies to the bereaved family. She also prayed for peace for the departed soul and forbearance for the family to bear this irreparable loss.

ADC Jammu imposes 1.54 lakh fine for food safety violations

■ HT News Network

JAMMU, FEBRUARY 27: As part of ongoing efforts to uphold food safety standards and protect public health, Additional Deputy Commissioner Jammu, Rakesh Kumar, has imposed a penalty of 1.54,000 under the Food Safety and Standards Act (FSSA), 2006, on multiple businesses in the district.

The fines were levied against manufacturers, distributors and retailers found selling substandard and misbranded food products. The action aims to prevent the sale of unsafe consumables and ensure strict compliance with food safety regulations.

Commercial establishments have been directed to maintain proper hygiene and sanitation in food handling, conduct regular quality checks to prevent contamination and adulteration, ensure accurate labeling and packaging as per FSSAI guidelines, and train staff in safe food handling practices.

The administration has also issued stern warning to businesses, emphasising strict adherence to food safety norms to protect consumers and prevent further legal consequences.

Apollo hosts International Health Dialogue 2025, launches World Economic Forum's India Digital Health Activator

■ HT News Network

Jammu, Feb 27: The International Health Dialogue (IHD) 2025, hosted by Apollo Hospitals, marked a significant meeting of healthcare leaders and policymakers, focusing on practical solutions for modern healthcare challenges. The event also featured the launch of the World Economic Forum's India Digital Health Activator.

Union Health & Family Welfare & Chemicals & Fertilizers, Minister Govt. of India J.P. Nadda, during the inauguration ceremony, remarked, "India is poised to lead the global healthcare revolution by leveraging technology alongside human-centered care. The vision of IHD 2025 aligns with our national goals to enhance the reach, accessibility, and quality of healthcare services across India and beyond." IHD 2025 brought together multiple specialized forums. The 12th International Patient Safety Conference (IPSC) provided a long-standing platform for discussing patient safety and care improvement measures, while the Technology for Health Innovation and Transformation (THIT) conference served as the setting for the WEF's announcement of the India Digital Health Activator. Dr. Prathap C Reddy—the founding force behind Apollo Hospitals—stated, "We must embrace both innovation and compassion to create a future where healthcare knows no bounds." His remarks underscored the event's focus on balancing technological advancement with the essential human touch. Dr. Preetha Reddy, Executive Vice Chairperson of Apollo Hospitals, explained the broader changes underway in the sector, saying, "Healthcare is undergoing a global transformation. With our 'Heal in India' initiative, we are using state-of-the-art technology to make care more accessible and beneficial for all. Even as we deploy advanced tools like AI and wearables, the human touch remains essential. We must act swiftly, accurately, and with genuine compassion."

This vision was reinforced by Dr. Sangita Reddy, Joint Managing Director of Apollo Hospitals, who remarked, "At Apollo, our mission is clear: healthcare should be accessible, available, and affordable to everyone. We are advancing vaccine development and embracing the latest technologies. I believe that one day, the world will look to India for genuine and effective care."

Dr. Madhu Sasidhar, President and CEO of Apollo Hospitals, highlighted that AI-powered clinical trials are accelerating drug discovery and improving disease detection rates.



Modi-BJP's claims of women's safety hollow: Cong

AGENCIES

NEW DELHI, FEB 27 (UNI)

The Congress on Thursday accused Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) of making "hollow promises" about ensuring women's security, and claimed that cases of harassment against women are increasing under the BJP's rule.

Addressing a press conference at the party headquarters here, Congress spokesperson Ajay Kumar referred to the alleged rape of a young woman inside a government bus in Pune on Tuesday and regretted that the police were unable to catch the culprit.

"The incident has raised serious questions on women's safety as the accused is still out of police custody even two days after the incident," he said.

The former Congress MP said that on the one hand, Narendra Modi and the BJP never tire of making hollow claims related to women's safety. On the other hand, the BJP governments have completely failed to stop crime against women.

"Why didn't the police know about the history-sheeter who was out on bail? If the accused was roaming around as a conductor, then what was the administration doing? Women are being treated under the BJP government, but why is the government sitting like lame ducks?" he asked. UNI GNK SSP

Haryana CM meets PM Modi

AGENCIES

NEW DELHI, FEB 27 (UNI)

Haryana Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini on Thursday met Prime Minister Narendra Modi and congratulated him on the BJP's landslide victory in the Delhi Assembly elections.

According to sources, during the around half an hour meeting, the Prime Minister and the Chief Minister reviewed the development programmes in Haryana.

Saini also briefed the Prime Minister on Haryana's infrastructure development and future projects.

He gave a report to Modi on the projects being undertaken by the Central and state governments in Haryana and their implementation.

The two leaders also dwelt on Haryana's sustainable development and the state's participation in Vikshit Bharat., 2047.

Saini also discussed with the Prime Minister about the upcoming civic election in the state.

The Prime Minister gave valuable suggestions to Shri Saini in this regard, the sources added. UNI GNK SSP

MEA takes up case of Indian student Neelam Shinde who is in coma in US

AGENCIES

NEW DELHI, FEB 27 (UNI)

The Ministry of External Affairs has taken up the case of Indian student, Neelam Shinde, who is in critical condition after a car accident in California, sources said.

The US side is looking into the formalities for early grant of visa for her family, the sources added.

Neelam Shinde, 35, a student from Satara, Maharashtra, is in critical condition after a car accident in California on February 14. She is currently in a coma and being treated in the ICU, Supriya Sule, a Member of Parliament, told the media.

The driver who allegedly caused the accident has been arrested.

As Neelam's condition remains grave, her family is desperately seeking assistance from the government to obtain an emergency visa that would allow her father, Tanaji Shinde, to travel to the US and be by her side during this critical period.

Shinde's family has applied for an urgent visa.

Voicing her concern, Sule posted on social media: "Student Neelam Shinde has met with an accident in the USA and is hospitalized in a local hospital. Her father, Tanaji Shinde, from Satara, Maharashtra, India, urgently needs to visit his daughter due to a medical emergency. Tanaji Shinde has applied for an urgent visa to the USA and requires assistance."

Sule requested the MEA to step in and help with the processing of the visa and tagged External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar, asking them to "look into the matter and provide the necessary assistance".

PM terms Maha Kumbh as "Maha Yagya" of unity, says it depicts unforgettable scene of Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat

AGENCIES

NEW DELHI, FEB 27 (UNI)

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday termed Maha Kumbh as "Maha Yagya" of unity saying, "This unforgettable scene of Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat became a grand festival of self-confidence".

Prime Minister Modi's remarks came after the world's largest spiritual gathering Maha Kumbh 2025 concluded on February 26, with the final holy dip on Mahashivratri.

Over the past 45 days, more than 650 million pilgrims have taken a holy dip in the sacred waters of Prayagraj.

In a series of tweets, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said, "The way the



faith of 140 crore countrymen came together for 45 days at the Maha Kumbh of unity in Prayagraj, at one time, and joined this one festival, is overwhelming".

"People from every section and every region of society united in this Maha Kumbh. This unforgettable scene of Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat became a grand festival of self-con-

fidence in crores of countrymen" he wrote on X.

The Prime Minister wished that "uninterrupted flow of unity among the countrymen continues to flow" and hailed the people to make this Maha Kumbh a grand success.

"Impressed by the hard work, efforts and determination of the countrymen to make this Maha Kumbh of unity a success, I will

visit Shri Somnath, the first Jyotirlinga out of the twelve Jyotirlingas. I will offer my Sankalp Pushp as a symbol of devotion and pray for every Indian. I wish that this uninterrupted flow of unity among the countrymen continues to flow like this" he said.

Earlier, Union Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw met the railway officials at Prayagraj Junction and appreciated them for their work done during the Maha Kumbh.

Addressing the media at the Prayagraj Junction he said that more than 16,000 trains were operated for the Mahakumbh in Prayagraj. "Around 4 crore 50 lakh passengers commuted in and out of Prayagraj through trains" he said.

More than 16k trains operated for Maha Kumbh Mela: Ashwini Vaishnaw

AGENCIES

PRAYAGRAJ, FEB 27 (UNI)

Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw on Thursday said that initially the Railways had planned to operate 13,000 trains, but in the wake of the unexpected influx of devotees during Maha Kumbh, more than 16,000 trains were successfully operated.

The Union Minister reached Prayagraj in the morning, met the railway officials and reviewed the arrangements of the Railways during the Maha Kumbh. He said that the organisation of Maha Kumbh is a symbol of Indian culture and social harmony.

He said that the grand event was made possible under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, in which Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath played



a major role. He also thanked the CMs of Bihar and Madhya Pradesh, with whose cooperation the Railways established better coordination and facilitated smooth travel to the devotees.

Vaishnaw said that initially the Railways had planned to operate 13,000 trains, but in view of the unexpected number of devotees, more than 16,000 trains were successfully operated. "During this, about 4.5 to 5 crore devotees reached Maha Kumbh safely and

got the holy benefit of Sangam bath. The railways established unprecedented coordination with the state police, RPF, GRP and Rapid Action Force, which made traffic and crowd management effective," he said.

He said that as per the directives of PM Modi, the faith and devotion of the devotees was given priority, not just the crowd. "With this view, the railways made many innovations, including the development of large hoarding areas in Khusrobagh, Jhunsi, Naini,

Chheoki, Prayag Junction and Prayagraj Junction. This provided convenience to the passengers and crowd control was done effectively," he said.

He said that during this 45-day mega event of Maha Kumbh, various departments of the railways worked in a very coordinated manner, due to which the entire arrangements remained smooth and no chaos was allowed to happen.

The Railway Minister said that the learning from this Maha Kumbh will be permanently included in the railway manual, so that it can be used in other big events in the future. He said that on the basis of this historical experience, the railways will bring new improvements in its crowd management and passenger facilities, so that better services can be provided to the passengers across the country.

Hindi has swallowed several Indian languages, many more gasping for survival: Stalin

AGENCIES

CHENNAI, FEB 27 (UNI)

Sharpening his attack against the BJP-led Government at the Centre for attempting to impose Hindi by cocering Tamil Nadu to accept NEP-2020 that eulogised the three-language policy, Chief Minister and DMK President MK Stalin on Thursday said Hindi has swallowed many Indian languages and many more are gasping for survival.

Stating that the push for a monolithic Hindi identity kills ancient mother tongues, he said Uttar Pradesh and Bihar were never just "Hindi heartlands."

Their real languages are now relics of the past, he said, adding, Tamil woke up and the tradition of Tamil's race has survived.

He said Hindi has swallowed Bhojpuri, Maithili, Awadhi, Braj, Bundeli, Garhwali, Kumaoni, Magahi, Marwari, Malvi, Chhattisgarhi, Santhali, Angika, Ho, Kharia, Khortha, Kurmali, Kurukh, Mundari and many more are now gasping for survival. Mr Stalin



some languages which gave space for Hindi did not exist now.

Posting a short letter on X address to brethren of other states, the Chief Minister said "My dear sisters and brothers from other states, Ever wondered how many Indian languages Hindi has swallowed? Bhojpuri, Maithili, Awadhi, Braj, Bundeli, Garhwali, Kumaoni, Magahi, Marwari, Malvi, Chhattisgarhi, Santhali, Angika, Ho, Kharia, Khortha, Kurmali, Kurukh, Mundari and many more are now gasping for survival."

"The push for a monolithic Hindi identity is what kills ancient mother tongues", he said.

"UP and Bihar were never just "Hindi heart-

lands." Their real languages are now relics of the past", he added.

"Tamil Nadu resists because we know where this ends. Tamil woke up and Tamil's race survived...some languages gave place for Hindi, but not exist now", Mr Stalin wrote, with a hashtag "Long live Tamil #LetterToBrethren #StopHindiImposition #SaveIndianLanguages".

The alleged attempt by the Centre to impose Hindi in Tamil Nadu created a major political storm especially after Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan had openly declared that Tamil Nadu will not get its due share of Rs 2,152 crore funds for the education sector under the SSA

scheme, unless it accepts the NEP-2020 paving the way for implementing the 3-language formula in the State. In rare display of unity, all the political parties, including the ruling DMK, its allies, the main Opposition and its allies and the PMK, spoke in one voice slamming the centre and strongly condemning it for trying to impose Hindi and said the long followed and the existing two-language formula would continue in the State and that the 3-language policy will never be allowed.

The political parties also staged various forms of agitations condemning the Centre's move, including the DMK Women's Wing resorting to a novel protest drawing colourful Kolams (Rangoli) in various hues and sizes with slogans flaying the Centre for attempting to impose Hindi and 3-language policy in Tamil Nadu.

A massive protest demonstration was organised by the DMK in Chennai in which leaders of all its alliance partners took part and shouted slogans denouncing the Centre on the issue.

Rajnath Singh releases hindi magazine 'Sashakt Bharat'



AGENCIES

NEW DELHI, FEB 27 (UNI)

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh has launched the first edition of the Ministry of Defence's biennial Hindi magazine 'Sashakt Bharat' here on Thursday.

The magazine contains poems on the valour, patriotism and sacrifice of the Armed Forces personnel and articles on the policies of the Government written by the personnel of the Ministry.

The Defence Minister appreciated the efforts of the Ministry of Defence, Department of Official Language for promoting Hindi. He stressed on the need to increase the adoption and use of Hindi and described the language as a connecting thread in the social and

cultural fabric of India.

The objective of 'Sashakt Bharat' magazine is to highlight the creative talent of the employees of the Ministry of Defence and encourage them to perform their daily tasks in Hindi. The e-version of the magazine is available on the official website of the Ministry of Defence.

Minister of State for Defence Sanjay Seth, Chief of Defence Staff General Anil Chauhan, Defence Secretary Rajesh Kumar Singh, Secretary (Defence Production) Sanjeev Kumar, Secretary (Ex-Servicemen Welfare) Dr Niten Chandra, Secretary, Department of Defence R&D and Chairman, DRDO, Dr Sameer V Kamath and other senior officers of the Ministry of Defence were present on the occasion.

SC clarifies power of arrest Under GST & Customs laws



AGENCIES

NEW DELHI, FEB 27 (UNI)

The Supreme Court on Thursday held that arbitrary arrests and coercion by tax authorities violate constitutional rights, and directed that enforcement actions by the officials should remain within the bounds of the law.

While delivering a landmark judgment clarifying the powers of arrest under the Goods and Services Tax (GST) Act and the Customs Act, a bench comprising Chief Justice of India (CJI) Sanjiv Khanna, Justice MM Sundresh, and Justice Bela M Trivedi ruled that officers under these tax laws do not hold the status of police officers, rejecting the argument that they should be treated as such.

The bench held that procedural safeguards under the Code of Criminal Procedure (now Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita) will equally apply to arrests made under these laws.

The top court further held that anticipatory bail provisions apply, allowing individuals to seek relief from the judiciary even before an FIR is registered.

The bench observed that the arrests under GST and Customs laws must be based on "verifiable material," not mere suspicion. Officers under these laws are not police officers and cannot exercise similar powers. Circulars issued by the GST department on arrests must be strictly followed.

The court directed that the allegations of coercion in tax payments must be taken seriously; those affected can approach the court for redress.

The SC said citizens should not be harassed due to ambiguities in arrest provisions. and emphasised that there can be no

private complaints under the GST Act.

The court applied the principle from the Arvind Kejriwal case, where arrests under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) must be backed by "reasons to believe." It ruled that the same principle applies to GST and Customs arrests since the relevant legal provisions are nearly identical.

CJI Khanna, while delivering the verdict, stated, "We have held that Deepal Mahajan's case was different, and we have referred to the Arvind Kejriwal case."

"Section 132 and 104 of the Customs Act, when specifying offences as cognizable and bailable, should instead be treated as non-cognizable and non-bailable."

"We have observed that allegations of coercion in tax payments have some merit and that such practices must not be permitted," he said.

Justice Trivedi, in her concurring judgment, addressed the powers of judicial review under Article 226, reaffirming the court's stance on upholding constitutional safeguards in tax-related arrests.

The decision was issued in response to 279 petitions challenging the penal provisions of the GST and Customs Acts,

The court's verdict significantly strengthens legal protections for accused individuals.

The apex judiciary has reinforced that arbitrary arrests and coercion by tax authorities violate constitutional rights, ensuring that enforcement actions remain within the bounds of the law.

The matter has now been listed for further proceedings on March 17.

Prior infection with seasonal flu may guard against severe bird flu: Study

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI

Previous infections with seasonal H1N1 flu may boost immunity and reduce the severity of H5N1 bird flu, according to a study.

The study, published in the journal Emerging Infectious Diseases, may help explain why most reported human cases of H5N1 bird flu in the US have not resulted in lethal outcomes.

Researchers from the universities of Pittsburgh and Emory conducted a study to decode the potential of viruses to spread between people.

Using a ferret model, they found that pre-existing immunity influences infection severity. It protected them against severe disease and death by a strain of H5N1 bird flu -- currently circulating in wild birds, poultry, and cows. On the other



hand, ferrets without prior immunity had more severe illness and fatal outcomes.

"All human flu pandemics emerge in the context of pre-existing immunity," said lead author Valerie Le Sage, research assistant professor of microbiology and molecular genetics at the University of Pittsburgh.

"Our model isn't perfect because the human

immune response is complicated. But if we are using ferrets as surrogates for humans, it is very important to do so in the context of prior immunity," Le Sage said.

Ferrets develop clinical symptoms of flu infection that closely resemble humans. They also develop a fever, sneeze, and have a runny nose.

The team showed that among the small number

of ferrets intranasally infected with H5N1, only those with previous exposure to H1N1 survived the infection. Despite a similar degree of lung tissue damage, ferrets without prior immunity exhibited higher fever, greater weight loss, and a decrease in playfulness compared to those with H1N1 prior immunity.

Immunity from previous infections also seemingly helped the animals to clear out the virus from their nasal passages faster and limited the infection to the respiratory tract.

In contrast, immunologically naive ferrets displayed signs of systemic infection with virus particles spreading throughout the body, including the heart, liver, and spleen.

The study highlighted the need for a concerted effort to consider pre-existing immunity in the context of pandemic risk assessment.

Regulatory violations in India's pharma sector fell 11pc in 2024

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI

India's pharmaceutical industry has witnessed a sharp drop of 11 per cent in regulatory violation instances in 2024, according to a report.

The regulatory violation instances which entail Official Action Indicated (OAI) tag by the US drug regulator, stood at 23 per cent in 2014. The drop suggests that the country's pharma industry has improved compliance to be at par with international standards.

Globally, the share of OAI status in 2014 stood at 6 per cent and has now more than doubled standing at 14 per cent.

The total number of US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) inspections has declined globally, from around 1,849 annually in 2014 to approximately 940 in 2024, while India's share has surged,



the Indian Pharmaceutical report said.

Meanwhile, another recent report showed that the country's pharmaceutical exports are projected to double from approximately \$27 billion in 2023 to reach \$65 billion by 2030. It showed that the pharma industry can further grow to an estimated \$350 billion by 2047.

While India is the largest supplier of generic

drugs globally, accounting for one in five generic drugs sold worldwide, the nation currently ranks 11th in terms of export value.

By innovating and diversifying its export basket to include specialty generics, biosimilars, and innovative products, the report emphasizes how India can potentially secure a position among the top five nations in export value by 2047,

according to the report by Bain & Company.

Indian biosimilar exports, currently valued at \$0.8 billion, are also projected to grow 5 times to \$4.2 billion by 2030, capturing 4 per cent of the global market, and reach \$30-35 billion by 2047, the report said. India's pharma exports at 70 per cent and valued at \$19 billion, are projected to grow to \$180-190 billion by 2047.

New blood test capable of detecting pregnancy health complications earlier

AGENCIES
SYDNEY

A team of Australian scientists has developed a new blood test that is capable of detecting health complications early in pregnancy.

The research team from the University of Queensland (UQ) said in a study published on Thursday that their "nanoflower sensor" could help reduce hospital admissions for newborn babies, Xinhua news agency reported.

The test screens blood samples for cell biomarkers and can detect complications such as gestational diabetes, preterm birth risks, and high blood pressure as early as 11 weeks into a pregnancy.

Carlos Salomon Gallo from UQ's Center for Clinical Research said that the team tested the sensor on blood samples from



201 pregnant women at 11-13 weeks' gestation and detected possible complications.

"Currently, most pregnancy complications cannot be identified until the second or third trimester, which means it can sometimes be too late for effective intervention. However, with this tech-

nology, pregnant women will be able to seek medical intervention much earlier. We also found our biosensor has more than 90 per cent accuracy in identifying women at risk of developing pregnancy complications," Gallo said.

The researcher said that the technology could save the healthcare system

millions of dollars every year by reducing neonatal intensive care unit admissions and preventing emergency pregnancy interventions, including cesarean section.

"This has the potential to revolutionise earlier risk assessment and interventions, improving clinical decision-making in obstetric care," Gallo added.

Mostafa Kamal Masud, a co-author of the study from UQ's Australian Institute for Bioengineering and Nanotechnology, said that the technology used nanosensors to detect low concentrations of biomarkers indicating possible health complications that are missed by current less sensitive testing methods.

The research is published in the journal Science Advances.

Study decodes how gastric bacteria leads to stomach cancer

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI

Gastric bacteria, which leaks around the stomach lining, plays a significant role in the onset of stomach cancer -- which has limited treatment options and poor survival rates, according to a study on Wednesday.

The study led by researchers from the University of Birmingham identified a crucial interaction between Helicobacter pylori and non-H. pylori bacteria in the precancerous stage of gastric cancer.

The results, published in the journal Helicobacter, could pave the way for a more effective treatment of pre-cancer.

"We are excited about the potential of this observation to open a new avenue of research in the prevention of stomach cancer. It is possible that a simple antibiotic treatment could be adminis-



tered to treat these bacteria. However, there is a lot more work to do," said Dr Amanda Rossiter-Pearson from the varsity.

Rossiter-Pearson emphasised the need to "determine the identity of these bacteria and understand how the presence of these bacteria in the precancerous condition impacts the patient's risk

of developing stomach cancer".

Gastric cancer is the fourth leading cause of cancer-related deaths worldwide. Infection with Helicobacter pylori bacteria, whilst asymptomatic for most people, has long been identified as the primary risk factor for stomach cancer.

However, why only

1 per cent of infections progress to gastric cancer is not fully understood. To probe, the team used the latest imaging technology to pinpoint the location of bacteria. They saw that while H. pylori exclusively colonised gastric glands, non-H. pylori bacteria leaked through the stomach lining in the pre-cancerous condition, gastric intestinal metaplasia.

The findings suggest that bacterial leakage into deeper gastric tissues may represent a previously overlooked factor in cancer progression.

If detected early, H. pylori can be eradicated with antibiotics and this reduces the patient's risk of developing gastric cancer.

However, once precancerous changes develop, antibiotic treatment against H. pylori becomes ineffective, underscoring the urgent need for alternative interventions.

New blood test to help detect risk of 30 age-related diseases

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI

A team of international researchers has developed a new blood test that could predict the risk of about 30 age-related conditions like lung cancer and heart disease that can appear decades later.

The blood test measures the age of different organs of the human body to predict the risk. The team including from the UK, France, and the US said the quick and easy blood test identifies whether a specific organ is ageing faster than expected -- an advance that may pave the way for personalised prevention and treatment methods.

The findings based on 20 years of follow-up data revealed that a heart that aged more rapidly predicted a significantly increased risk of cardiovascular diseases, while accelerated lung ageing predisposed people to respiratory infections,



chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), and lung cancer.

The highest risk of dementia was found in those whose immune systems aged faster than usual. Similarly, people with accelerated kidney ageing were more likely to later develop vascular disease, type 2 diabetes, and liver diseases, while biological ageing of nearly all organs predicted an increased risk of kidney disease.

Their study, published in The Lancet Digital Health, shows how accelerated ageing in specific organs can predict not only diseases affecting that organ but diseases across the rest of the body as well.

"Our organs function as

an integrated system, but they can age at different rates. Ageing in particular organs can contribute to numerous ageing-related diseases, so it's important for us to take care of all aspects of our health," said lead author Professor Mika Kivimaki, from the Faculty of Brain Sciences, University College London (UCL). "I believe that in the future of health care, the prevention of age-related diseases could begin much earlier, prioritising those who would benefit most and tailoring interventions to individual risk profiles," Kivimaki said.

The international research team, led by scientists from UCL Brain Sciences, Stanford University (US), Inserm (France), and the University of Helsinki (Finland), analysed blood samples collected in the late 1990s from over 6,200 middle-aged adults to determine the biological age of nine organs (heart, blood vessels, liver, immune system, pancreas,

kidneys, lungs, intestines, and the brain) and for the entire body.

The researchers measured the gap between a person's chronological (actual) age, and the assessed biological age of each of their organs as determined by markers of ageing specific to that organ, finding that organs often aged at different rates in the same person.

Participants' health status was tracked for 20 years and by the end of the follow-up period, they were aged 65-89. Many had been diagnosed with at least one of the ageing-related diseases investigated in the study.

"We hope our findings could contribute to new ways of helping people stay healthy for longer as they age. Blood tests may advise whether a person needs to take better care of a particular organ, and potentially provide an early-warning signal that they may be at risk of a particular disease," Kivimaki said.

Study shows continuous glucose monitors may harm healthy adults

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI

While continuous glucose monitors (CGMs) may be of significant help to people living with diabetes, they may harm healthy adults by showing inaccurate results that can lead to unnecessary food restrictions, according to a study on Wednesday.

CGMs were originally designed to help diabetics manage their blood sugar. It helps by tracking glycaemic index (GI) -- a measure of how quickly a food can make your blood sugar. However, these devices are now increasingly being used by health-conscious adults to track how different foods affect their glucose levels.

The peer-reviewed research, published in The American Journal of Clinical Nutrition, warns that CGMs could be overestimating blood sugar levels in healthy adults, leading to unnecessary dietary changes.



"CGMs are fantastic tools for people with diabetes because even if a measurement isn't perfectly accurate, it's still better than not having a measurement at all. However, for someone with good glucose control they can be misleading based on their current performance," said Professor Javier Gonzalez from the Department for Health, from the University of Bath.

"For healthy individuals, relying on CGMs

could lead to unnecessary food restrictions or poor dietary choices. If you want to assess your blood sugar accurately, traditional methods are still the way to go. We want to better identify the sources of the error in CGMs so that we can improve their performance in the future and have active research on this topic," Gonzalez added.

Researchers measured blood sugar responses in healthy volunteers (non-diabetic, within a healthy BMI range) using two methods -- a CGM and the gold standard finger-prick test -- to assess the accuracy of CGMs in fruit-based products, ranging from whole fruit to smoothies.

The CGM consistently reported higher blood sugar levels compared to finger-prick tests. When participants consumed a smoothie, the device overestimated the GI by 30 per cent, reporting a GI of 69 (medium) compared to the traditional test result

of 53 (low).

Whole fruit was misclassified as medium or high-GI foods by CGMs, while the finger-prick test showed they were low-GI. This could lead users to mistakenly believe that fruit could cause harmful spikes in blood sugar.

The research also debunked the common myth that blending fruits into a smoothie raises their GI. Whether eaten whole or blended, fruits like apples, bananas, mangoes, and oranges remained low on the GI.

CGMs are unlikely to be a valid method to determine whether a food has high or low GI, said the researchers. Gonzalez said the CGMs may be inaccurate because they measure glucose in the fluid surrounding your cells, not directly in your blood. "This can lead to discrepancies due to factors like time delays, blood flow, and how glucose moves between different parts of the body."



Real Madrid draws first blood in Copa del Rey semi against Real Sociedad

AGENCIES

MADRID, FEB. 27 (UNI)

Endrick's first-half goal gave Real Madrid a first-leg advantage in their Copa del Rey semifinal against Real Sociedad, as they won 1-0 in San Sebastian.

Real Sociedad gave everything to find an equalizer, but lacked finesse in the final pass, although Madrid goalkeeper Andriy Lunin also made several good saves.

Madrid coach Carlo Ancelotti had some surprises, with Endrick and Arda Guler both starting, and that paid off in the 19th minute when the Brazilian collected a diagonal pass from Jude Bellingham, with home defender Igor Zubeldia playing him onside.

AUS pacer Starc elaborates on reasons behind Champions Trophy absence

AGENCIES

DUBAI, FEB 27 (UNI)

The Australian fast bowler has elaborated on his decision to skip the Champions Trophy in Pakistan and Dubai.

Australia quick Mitchell Starc has revealed the main reason why he decided to sit out the current ICC Champions Trophy 2025.

Starc was originally named in Australia's preliminary squad for the eight-team event, but was then a notable absentee when the two-time champions revealed their final group of 15 players earlier this month, an ICC report. Australia said at the time that Starc had withdrawn from the tournament due to personal reasons and they supported the move and the experienced quick has provided further clarity on why he isn't part of the Aussies' Champions Trophy campaign.

Buttler ponders future as England come to grips with Champions Trophy exit

AGENCIES

LAHORE, FEB 27 (UNI)

England captain Jos Buttler has accepted that England's leadership in white-ball cricket needs to come under careful consideration.

England will undergo a limited overs leadership review, according to captain Jos Buttler.

It comes as his side crashed out of the ICC Champions Trophy 2025, again failing to clear an expected qualification hurdle of progressing past the group stage of a 50-over ICC event after losses to Australia and Afghanistan.

It's the second straight men's ODI tournament where they've missed out on reaching the top four.

Speaking after their loss to Afghanistan, in what was arguably the most gripping match of the Champions Trophy so far, the England captain addressed queries about the team's leadership head on.

He was asked, specifically, whether he remains the right man for the job.

"The results aren't where they need to be and I personally need to



consider all possibilities," Buttler said.

"We need to get us, as a team, back to where England cricket needs to be in the white-ball formats. And I think I've got to work out, personally, am I part of the problem or am I part of the solution?" he said.

Buttler confirmed he will be considering his future as captain over the coming days. Bear in mind, England will conclude their Champions Trophy campaign on Saturday against a South Africa side potentially looking to stamp their place in the semi-finals.

"I will take a little bit of time to just work out personally what I think is right," he continued.

"I'm not going to make any emotional decisions

right here, right now. You're probably not the first people I'd discuss that with," Buttler said.

"Results are tough and they weigh heavy at times. And, of course, you want to be leading a winning team and we haven't been that for a while now so obviously that brings some difficult moments," he said.

Respected commentator and former West Indies fast bowler Ian Bishop further validated England's leadership dilemma, speaking in Lahore after Afghanistan's victory.

"They have to be a much better team than that," he said.

"I think there might be leadership questions now, given the history that they've had from 2019, and that is all I think it is,

because I think the quality is there, but they are not harnessing it. And that might just mean maybe another leadership," Buttler said.

England will rue missed opportunities, since the side set up winning opportunities in both of their Champions Trophy matches.

It took a record run chase for Australia to edge them out earlier in the tournament, while Afghanistan claimed a cliff-hanger.

Buttler declared his side need to get better at closing.

"We had our chances in the game," he continued.

"We're obviously gutted," Buttler said.

"A more firing, confident team would have got over the line tonight. It's up to us as individuals, as a team, and as a whole group to find ways to get ourselves back where we need to be," he said.

"I got myself into a nice position again. And I just haven't been converting those positions in the recent past into some of the innings that I've played in an England shirt in the past. And that's obviously a frustration," Buttler said.

Jonathan Trott lauds resilient Afghanistan as focus shifts to Australia showdown



AGENCIES

LAHORE, FEB 27 (UNI)

Afghanistan have the chance to qualify for the semi-final stage in back-to-back Men's ICC limited-over tournaments.

Having shocked the world in last year's ICC Men's T20 World Cup, Jonathan Trott's side are now just one win away from reaching the final four yet again.

It's why he moved to ensure celebrations after their England win were only short-lived.

"I'm going to make sure when they wake up tomorrow, they enjoy tonight, (but) wake up tomorrow ready for Australia," he told the media after their nail-biting victory over the English.

"As soon as they wake up tomorrow, the focus is on Australia," Trott said. Recent performances

on the world stage mean this Afghanistan side can no longer fly under the radar. It's something Trott is very aware of.

"Australia aren't going to take us lightly," he continued.

"So, we've got to be prepared. In the past, perhaps people would have seen the fixture and thought it was a little bit easier than playing a historic Test nation. But in this format, in these conditions, I don't see that," Trott said.

"Since I've been coach we've played against Australia three times and we've been in the game each of those games. So, we should take a lot of confidence from that. And I think certainly what happened in the World Cup, T20 World Cup, and I say this to the players as well, that Afghanistan's never going to be taken lightly ever again," he said.

USA seal semi-final spot at FIH Hockey Nations Cup with victory over Japan

AGENCIES

SANTIAGO (CHILE), FEB 27 (UNI)

United States took on Japan a day after their FIH Hockey Women's Nations Cup match was originally scheduled to be played, following a general power outage in Chile which led to a government imposed a lockdown last evening.

USA, who looked impressive in their first outing against Canada, winning the game 2-0, continued their winning ways, scoring two goals in each half to win 4-2, adding three more points in Pool A

and qualifying for the semi-finals, with one pool match against hosts Chile still to be played.

Three goals were scored in the opening half of the game, with all three coming in the first quarter. USA, who started the game on the front foot, capitalised on their momentum to score first in the 7th minute through



Katie Dixon's reverse hit, following a failed attempt by a couple of Japanese defenders to clear Sophia Gladioux's bobbled pass.

Japan equalised in the 12th minute through Mai Toriyama, who latched on to an aerial pass in the USA circle and took on the shot from a narrow angle, sneaking it past Jennifer Rizzo on her near post. USA were back in lead in the final minute of the quarter however, with Keele Lepage firing

home from the top of the circle with another

vicious reverse hit that found the bottom corner of the goal to perfection.

Japanese head coach Akira Takahashi spoke at half time about his team needing to score first in the second half, but once again it was USA who made the better start and found the first goal of the half through Madeleine Zimmer, scoring from her team's first penalty corner of the match in the 44th minute.

USA added a fourth goal in the final quarter with Mia Schoenbeck scoring

her first international goal! The Japanese goalkeeper would have normally expected to save Schoenbeck's shot from the top of the circle, but her attempted kick missed the mark and deflected off her pad into the goal.

Japan pulled one goal back through a Hanami Saito penalty stroke, but that proved to be no more than consolation as USA came away with a 4-2 win.

Maddie Zimmer was awarded player of the match for USA and said: "Really proud of the team and how we dealt with the postponed match. The conditions were very different compared to our first game which was much later in the evening. For the next game against Chile we will focus on improving our pressing a bit and bringing maximum energy across the entire 60 minutes, because we know Chile are a side that play with a lot of energy themselves."

IOC grants provisional recognition to governing body World Boxing

AGENCIES

LAUSANNE, FEB 27 (UNI)

The International Olympic Committee Executive Board has provisionally recognized World Boxing as the International Federation within the Olympic Movement governing global boxing. Boxing has been an Olympic sport since 1904, but due to issues related to governance, officiating and

financial management, the IOC in 2019 suspended its recognition of the International Boxing Association, which had long served as the sport's governing body. With no new governing body established for boxing after the IOC withdrew its recognition of the IBA in June 2023, boxing has not yet been included as an event at the 2028 Olympic Games in Los Angeles. The

boxing competition at the 2024 Paris Olympics was run directly by the IOC.

"We have no problem with boxing. We have no problem with boxers. But we have big problems with the boxing governing body," IOC president Thomas Bach said at a news conference on Wednesday following the decision in October 2023.

Founded in April 2023, World Boxing currently

comprises 78 member associations from five continents and has established four continental federations. Over half the boxers and medalists at Paris 2024 are affiliated with World Boxing member associations.

On May 7, 2024, World Boxing held its first official meeting with the IOC to begin collaborative planning for boxing's Olympic future.

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