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Voice To The Voiceless

Tourism promotion in Srinagar city a key focus of my Govt: CM Omar Abdullah

HT News Network

JAMMU, MARCH 13: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah today stated that the government is prioritizing the promotion of religious and tourism places in Srinagar city to boost tourism and attract more visitors.

"Places like Dal, Nishat, Shalimar, Chashmashahi, Pari Mahal, shrines, temples, gurudwaras, and other landmarks define the uniqueness of Srinagar. We are committed to promoting these destinations," the Chief Minister said while addressing the Legislative Assembly.

He was responding to a query raised by Member Ali Mohammad Sagar regarding the tourism sector's role in J&K's economy and the steps taken

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Finalization of JKAS departmental examination syllabus in final stages: CM Omar Abdullah

HT News Network

JAMMU, MARCH 13: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah today informed the J&K Legislative Assembly that the finalization of the syllabus for the 2018-24 batches of J&K Administrative Services is in its final stages, and the examinations will be conducted soon thereafter. Responding to a supplementary question from Member Aijaz Ahmad Jan, the Chief Minister acknowledged the delays but assured that the process is now nearing completion. "The government has gradually streamlined these processes, which had been

delayed for some time. However, the complexity of the revision caused an unavoidable delay. This is the first syllabus revision since 2000—after nearly 25 years—which required significant changes," he said.

He further explained that the administration conducted a comparative analysis of J&K's syllabus with those of other States and Union Territories to ensure alignment with national standards.

"Necessary modifications have been incorporated, and relevant departments, including Revenue, Law and Information Technology, have contributed to the process," he added.

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Chief Minister Omar Abdullah extends greetings on Holi

HT News Network/KNO

JAMMU, MARCH 13: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah has extended warm greetings to the people of Jammu and Kashmir on the joyous occasion of Holi.

In his felicitation message, the Chief Minister said that Holi symbolizes happiness, joy and togetherness. He expressed hope that the festival would bring harmony and strengthen the bonds of brotherhood among the people.

"The colours of Holi represent the vibrancy of life and the spirit of unity. May this festival fill everyone's lives with happiness, prosperity and cheer," the Chief Minister said.

He also prayed for peace, progress and prosperity in Jammu and Kashmir and wished that the occasion would bring new hope and joy to all. He also prayed for peace, progress and prosperity in Jammu and Kashmir and wished that the occasion would bring new hope and joy to all.

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NEWS BRIEF

Lieutenant Governor's greetings on the occasion of Holi

HT News Network

JAMMU, MARCH 13: Lieutenant Governor Shri Manoj Sinha has extended his heartiest greetings to the people on the occasion of Holi which will be celebrated on March 14. In a message, the Lieutenant Governor said: "On the auspicious occasion of Holi, I extend my hearty greetings and good wishes to all."

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Sunil Sharma meets Amit Shah, discusses Security, Development, Budget issues..

HT News Network

JAMMU, MARCH 13: Delhi: Sunil Sharma, Leader of Opposition in Jammu & Kashmir called upon Union Home Minister Amit Shah at Delhi.

Sunil Sharma deliberated with the Union Home Minister on the key issues of Jammu & Kashmir pertaining to the Security and Development, and Budget

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13 J&K Youths Trafficked to Myanmar Rescued, Return Home Safely

HT News Network

Srinagar, Mar 13: Thirteen youths from Jammu and Kashmir, who fell victim to a cyber-fraud trafficking network and were taken to Myanmar, have been safely brought back home, officials said on Wednesday.

SSP Counter Intelligence Kashmir, Tahir Ashraf, revealed that the individuals were deceived through fake job offers circulating on social media platforms, particularly Facebook. The victims, mostly educated young men, were lured by fraudulent advertisements promising lucrative

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Dy CM extends Holi greetings

HT News Network

JAMMU, MARCH 13: Deputy Chief Minister, Surinder Choudhary, has extended warm greetings to the people of Jammu and Kashmir on the auspicious occasion of Holi.

While emphasizing that the festival of colours symbolizes love, joy and harmony, he expressed optimism that Holi would bring happiness and prosperity into the lives of people of Jammu and Kashmir. The Deputy Chief Minister also hoped that people will celebrate the festival with enthusiasm while fostering unity and brotherhood

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JK witnesses 3.60% annual increase in electric power purchases since 2016-17

HT News Network/KNO

Srinagar, Mar 13: In past nine years, Jammu and Kashmir has witnessed an average annual increase of 3.60 percent in electric power purchases while the growth stands at only 2.45 percent.

An official said, "Over the past years from 2016-17 to 2024-25, Jammu and Kashmir has experienced an average annual increase of 3.60 percent in electric power purchases, as per extrapolated data."

"When considered on a per capita basis, the growth rate stands at 2.45 percent per year, reflecting the region's increasing energy demand. This growth is also in line with the region's population increase, which has been growing

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Our youth should have Science in one hand and Samskara in the other: LG Sinha

Addresses Spiritual & Value Education Summit at New Delhi

HT News Network

JAMMU, MARCH 13: Lieutenant Governor Shri Manoj Sinha today addressed the Spiritual and Value Education Summit at New Delhi.

In his inaugural address, the Lieutenant Governor exhorted the distinguished scholars and educators for transforming the education system into a holistic framework to nurture intellectual growth and moral integrity among students. "Seamless integration of ethics



and value in education is crucial to create an enlightened society and a powerful nation. Without the fine balance of our ancient value system

and modern skills it is impossible to sustain and further long-run economic growth.

Value based education will enable

students to explore their true strength. It will help in character building and inspire them for righteous living. This holistic education system can take the nation on growth trajectory and bring about the changes necessary for a developed nation," the Lieutenant Governor said.

The Lieutenant Governor emphasised on imparting ethical, moral, and social values alongside academic knowledge and skills.

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MeT issues 3-day 'yellow alert' for J&K

Intermittent spells of rain, snow expected across UT: Director

HT News Network

Srinagar, Mar 13: Meteorological department (MeT) on Thursday issued a 3-day 'yellow alert' as rains and snow lashed Jammu and Kashmir for the second running day today.

Director MeT, Dr Mukhtar Ahmad told the news agency—that prevalent weather conditions are expected to prevail till March 16, saying that the intermittent rains and



snowfall is expected at many places during the period.

However, he said that there is no forecast of any major weather activity till

March 16.

The Director MeT said that intermittent spells of light to moderate rain and snow (higher reaches) are expected across J&K during the next three days.

On March 16, he said that intermittent light rain and snow is expected at few places towards morning & improvement towards afternoon, adding that generally dry weather is expected from March 17 to 24.

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BJP Fueling Communal Tensions to Divert Public Attention: Mehbooba Mufti

HT News Network/KNT

Srinagar, Mar 13: PDP President and former Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti accused the BJP of deliberately stoking communal tensions to divert attention from pressing public issues. She alleged that the party thrives on polarizing society and targeting Muslims to further its political agenda.

While talking to reporters, Mehbooba Mufti criticized Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, claiming that his actions have disturbed communal harmony and spread hatred among communities.



"Instead of addressing issues of unemployment, inflation, and governance failures, BJP leaders are invoking religion and harassing Muslims to shift focus from real

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Reorganisation of Jammu & Kashmir

Rs 2504 crore liabilities to be transferred to Ladakh: J&K government tells Assembly

HT News Network

Jammu, Mar 13: The Jammu & Kashmir Government on Thursday informed the Legislative Assembly that liabilities amounting to Rs 2504.46 crore of the erstwhile state of Jammu & Kashmir have to be transferred to Ladakh Union Territory. In a written reply to a question of MLA Lolab Qaiser Jamsheed Lone, Minister-in-charge,



Finance, Omar Abdullah disclosed that the financial liabilities of Rs 2504.46 crore are to be transferred to Ladakh.

"As regards apportionment of public debt, the apportionment of assets & liabilities is to be carried out as per the notification SO-329 of GAD dated 30/10/2020," he said, as per news agency—.

He said that most of the recommendations regarding apportionment of assets and liabilities

between J&K & Ladakh have been implemented.

The Minister also informed the House that the matter has been taken up with Ladakh Union Territory and the Ministry of Home Affairs.

After the reorganization of Jammu & Kashmir, the Ministry of Home Affairs had set-up an advisory committee for distribution of assets and liabilities between J&K and Ladakh.

The advisory committee

Admin establishes old age homes in 19 J&K districts

Senior Citizen Day Care Centre in Srinagar emerges as activity hub for elderly

HT News Network

Srinagar, Mar 13 (The Jammu and Kashmir administration has established residential old age homes in 19 districts where senior citizens are offered health-care facilities and recreational activities, reveals the official data accessed by the news agency—

It states that three senior citizen day care homes are presently operational in



Jammu and Srinagar cities, providing secure spaces for elderly citizens to socialize and avail necessary services.

Two old age homes at Anantnag and Ganderbal were built in 2023-24 for Rs

21 crore, providing shelter and care to elderly population, the data reveals.

As many as, 809 special camps for senior citizens were conducted in the Union Territory and were attended by 51,000 senior citizens.

The data, according to KNO, also states that 31 geriatric caregivers have been trained to deliver specialized social services to elderly citizens, ensuring their

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Agricultural land shrinking in J&K, data reveals

Net sown area stagnates, fallow land rises; experts warn of food import dependence as erratic weather, urban expansion threaten farmland

HT News Network

Srinagar, Mar 13: Jammu and Kashmir has long been an agrarian society, with farming sustaining millions of people for generations. However, recent government data reveals a troubling trend—agricultural land is shrinking, while more land is being abandoned or turning barren.

Data from the Financial Commissioner (Revenue), J&K, accessed



by the news agency—reveals that the net sown area has stagnated at around 30-31% of the total land over the last four years. In 2020-21,

it was 736,000 hectares, dropping slightly to 733,000 hectares in 2022-23, before rising marginally to 738,000 hectares in 2023-24.

Meanwhile, fallow land—land left uncultivated—has increased from 120,000 hectares in 2020-21 to 135,000 hectares in 2023-24.

The rise in barren and uncultivable land, from 295,000 hectares to 302,000 hectares, further signals that farming is under strain.

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SMC Commissioner Reviews Progress of National Clean Air Program (NCAP)

■ HT News Network

Srinagar, March 13, 2025 – In a significant move to bolster air quality in the Srinagar, Dr. Owais Ahmed (IAS), Commissioner Srinagar Municipal Corporation, today chaired a comprehensive review meeting focused on the National Clean Air Program (NCAP). The meeting, held at the SMC Headquarters, was attended by the Joint Commissioner (Adm) SMC, Joint Commissioner Works, Superintending Engineer (Drainage), the Divisional Forest Officer (SMC), and Executive Engineers from the Roads & Buildings (R&B) Department, among others.

The meeting provided an in-depth review of the progress made on NCAP projects during the financial year 2024-2025. Dr. Owais commended the significant advancements achieved in improving air quality through various initiatives, while also pinpointing areas that require further attention and development. Emphasizing the critical importance of tackling air pollution, Dr. Owais stated, "Clean air is not just an environmental



issue; it is a public health imperative. We must work diligently to implement our plans effectively and ensure that our community can breathe cleaner air. It is essential that we remain committed, proactive, and innovative in our approach

to tackling air pollution." The Commissioner called for an accelerated pace of work and enhanced collaboration among all departments involved. He issued directives aimed at streamlining processes and fostering accountabil-

ity, ensuring that all stakeholders are engaged and focused on achieving the goals of the NCAP. The meeting concluded with a unanimous commitment from all participants to prioritize the National Clean Air Program, reinforcing their dedication to safeguarding the environment for future generations. The SMC is resolute in its mission to create a cleaner, healthier Srinagar and will continue to monitor the progress of NCAP projects during the financial year 2024-2025. Dr. Owais commended the significant advancements achieved in improving air quality through various initiatives, while also pinpointing areas that require further attention and development. Emphasizing the critical importance of tackling air pollution, Dr. Owais stated, "Clean air is not just an environmental issue; it is a public health imperative. We must work diligently to implement our plans effectively and ensure that our community can breathe cleaner air. It is essential that we remain committed, proactive,

Matter taken up with MHA to transfer portion of debt and liabilities to Ladakh UT: CM

■ HT News Network

JAMMU, MARCH 13: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah today informed the Legislative Assembly that a committee had been constituted to ensure the transparent distribution of assets, liabilities and budget between the Union Territories of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh following the reorganization.



Responding to a query from Member Qaysar Jams-haid Lone regarding the apportionment of assets, liabilities and loans, the Chief Minister stated that the process is being carried out in accordance with Notification SO-339 of GAD, dated October 30, 2020. "The apportionment was to be conducted in a manner to ensure a fair transfer of assets, liabilities and budget between the two UTs. After completion of the process, an official gazette notification was issued on October 31, 2020," he said.

The Chief Minister, who also holds the portfolio of Finance Minister, further informed that most of the committee's recommendations have already been implemented. "Regarding the apportionment of public debt, financial liabilities amounting to 2,504.46 crore are to be transferred to the UT of Ladakh. The matter has been taken up with the Ministry of Home Affairs and the administration of Ladakh," he added. The Chief Minister, who also holds the portfolio of Finance Minister, further informed that most of the committee's recommendations.

Advisor to Chief Minister holds public outreach camp at Raabita office

■ HT News Network

SRINAGAR, MARCH 13: As a sequel to government's commitment towards ensuring public outreach and responsive governance, Advisor to Chief Minister, Nasir Aslam Wani, today held an extensive public outreach programme at Chief Minister's Public Service and Outreach Office (Raabita) in Srinagar. Several delegations representing various sectors, organizations and regions met the Advisor and presented their issues, concerns and demands seeking prompt redress of the same. During the interaction, delegations from JK Water Sports Association, Kashmir Wakaf Tenants Federation, Senior Lecturers, Kashmir Borrowers Association and the Power Development Department put forth grievances related to their respective fields. Additionally, deputations from Budgam, Ganderbal, Kulgam and Kupwara called on the Advisor, raising pressing developmental and administrative concerns affecting their regions. The Advisor, while responding to issues raised by the delegations, assured them that their concerns would be conveyed to the relevant departments for necessary action. He



emphasized that the Chief Minister is committed towards ensuring a people-centric administration where public grievances are addressed in a transparent and time-bound manner. He stated that the government remains dedicated towards enhancing governance efficiency, resolving public issues at the grassroots level and ensuring equitable development across all districts of the region. The Advisor reaffirmed that concrete measures would be taken up to address public concerns effectively. He reiterated that such interactions would continue to be held regularly to ensure citizen-friendly governance and transparent decision-making. The delegations representing various sectors appreciated the Raabita initiative,

highlighting how it has provided them with a direct and accessible platform to engage with the administration. The Advisor reaffirmed that concrete measures would be taken up to address public concerns effectively. He reiterated that such interactions would continue to be held regularly to ensure citizen-friendly governance and transparent decision-making. The delegations representing various sectors appreciated the Raabita initiative, highlighting how it has provided them with a direct and accessible platform.

DC Srinagar reviews progress of PM Surya Ghar-Muft Bijli Yojna, works under RDSS

Emphasizes regular progress reporting, inter-departmental coordination to achieve targets in set timelines

■ HT News Network

SRINAGAR, MARCH 13: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Srinagar, Dr. Bilal Mohi-Ud-Din Bhat today chaired a meeting of Engineers of KPDCCL at the DC Office Complex, here to review the progress on installation of Solar Rooftops under PM Surya Ghar-Muft Bijli Yojna (PMSGMBY) and works under Revamped Distribution Sector Scheme (RDSS).

At the outset, the DC took a firsthand appraisal of the progress made in installation of Solar Rooftops under PM Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojna in all Electric Divisions of the district.

The DC was informed that against the target of 6779 households set for Srinagar District under PM Surya Ghar Muft Bijli scheme, over 1961 applications of consumers of the Power Development Department have been received of which 600 solar plants stands commissioned. On the occasion, the DC emphasized the



benefits of PM Surya Ghar Muft Bijli scheme and urged KPDCCL functionaries to generate awareness among the people about the benefits of installing Rooftop Solar plants under PM Surya Ghar-Muft

Bijli Yojna. He also instructed Officers from the PDD and J&K Bank to work in tandem to raise awareness about the scheme and simplify access to easy loans for the subscriber's contribution.

The DC asked for making concerted efforts to increase the number of applicants and timely installations in favour of each of them.

During the meeting, Superintending Engineer KPDCCL gave a detailed Power-Point presentation highlighting different aspects of the scheme and progress made in its implementation.

While reviewing the progress of ongoing works under Revamped Distribution Sector Scheme (RDSS), the DC emphasized on expediting progress across all Electric Divisions of the District to ensure the successful and timely completion of the project. He instructed for regular progress reporting and inter-departmental coordination to achieve targets within set timelines.

Besides Chief Planning Officer Srinagar, the meeting was attended by Superintending Engineers, Executive Engineers, other Officers of Kashmir Power Distribution Corporation Limited (KPDCCL) and Turnkey Contractor.

Budget Session 2025
Question Hour in LA

No domicile certificate issued to non-locals in Magam, Narbal; 52 issued in Beerwah on marriage basis: Sakeena Itoo

■ HT News Network

JAMMU, MARCH 13: The Government today informed the House that no non-local resident has been issued a Domicile certificate in Magam and Narbal areas of Budgam district.

This was started by Minister for Health and Education, Sakina Itoo, while replying to a question raised by Dr. Shafi Ahmad Wani. She informed that 18921 Domicile Certificates have been issued in Narbal and 26277 in Magam saying that no Domicile Certificate has been issued to non-local residents in these two Tehsils. The Minister said that 62343 Domicile certificates have been issued in Beerwah including 52 to non-locals on marriage basis.

Land transfer for F&V Mandi at Nowdal Tral in final stage: RDD Minister

■ HT News Network

JAMMU, MARCH 13: The transfer process for 16 kanal of land patch identified for development of Fruit and Vegetable (F&V) Mandi at Nowdal in Tral is in the final stage and will be completed within two months.

Minister for Rural Development Department, Javed Ahmad Dar, informed this while replying to a question raised by Rafiq Ahmad Malik in the Legislative Assembly.

He said that the transfer of land for establishment of Fruit and Vegetable Mandi at Nowdal in Tral Constituency is under process with the Revenue Department. He added that the land patch of 16 kanal, including 8.5 kanal of state land, was identified during 2020 and the process of paper authentication and completion is under progress.

7353 Safai Karamcharis working in J&K ULBs: Sakeena Itoo

■ HT News Network

JAMMU, MARCH 13: The government today said that the cases of regularization of Safai Karamcharis working as casual labourers in different Urban Local Bodies of Jammu and Kashmir shall be examined through the Committee constituted for regularization of daily wagers.

Minister for Health, Sakeena Itoo, on behalf of Chief Minister, Omar Abdullah, was replying to a question raised by Bharat Bhushan in the Legislative Assembly. She informed the House that 7353 Safai Karamcharis are currently working in various ULBs of J&K. She said that, of these, many have completed more than 10 to 15 years of service and work on permanent positions, while only few Safai Karamcharis are working as Casual Labourers.

Facilities created at Sports Stadium, GDC Akhnoor: YS&S Minister

■ HT News Network

JAMMU, MARCH 12: Minister for Youth Services & Sports, Satish Sharma, today informed the House that various sports related facilities have been created for the local youth in Akhnoor Constituency. The Minister was replying to a question raised by Mohan Lal in the Legislative Assembly.

He said that Indoor Stadium Akhnoor is in good condition and functional. Similarly, the sports ground of Degree College, Akhnoor, has been upgraded recently by way of construction of various courts and VIP Pavilion and seating tiers. However, the super structure of the pavilion building in the play field of Palwan has been damaged, the Minister stated.

The Minister informed that various up-gradation and development works of sports infrastructure at GDC Akhnoor have been completed and handed over to the college authorities. These included construction of a Pavilion for VIPs, sitting tiers, courts for Basketball, Volleyball, Handball, Kho-Kho, and development of Cricket and Football ground, he added.

Moreover, the Minister said that the Sports Council had executed these works while the budgeting was done by the Higher Education Department. The Minister said that he will conduct on the spot inspection of all the upgradation works and enquiry shall be initiated in case any lacuna was found. Moreover, the Minister said that the Sports Council had executed these works while the budgeting was done by the Higher Education Department. The Minister said that he will conduct on the spot inspection of all the upgradation works and enquiry shall be initiated in case any lacuna was found.

EDITORIAL

Order probe in GMC Handwara fiasco

The construction of Government Medical College, Handwara in the frontier district of Kupwara turned out to be a flash point between the health & medical education minister Sakeena Masood Itoo and legislator from Handwara Sajad Gani Lone. The health minister and the MLA concerned traded barbs in the legislative assembly which is in session at Jammu these days. Both Itoo and Lone entered into a verbal duel over the site selected for the construction of the medical college Handwara.

The MLA Handwara posed a question as to how the construction was taken up at a site which is flood prone and didn't the government know that the money would go waste once the medical college becomes operational. Responding to this the health minister said that the previous site selected for the construction of the medical college was flood prone and a new site has been selected for the same. She said that there is no scope for politics on the issue and the legislator should stop scoring brownie points over the same.

The health minister even went to the extent of saying that an amount of 40 crores has been wasted on the construction carried out at the old site of the GMC Handwara. She said that the proposal for an alternate site for the medical college has been submitted to the union health ministry. Politics apart it is quite astonishing that the planners have taken the issue very lightly and for the same they need to be taken to task.

The health minister should order a probe in this regard and stern action needs to be taken against the people who allowed the same. The matter should not be buried under the carpet and action in this case will ensure that the officers and officials don't take people for a ride when it comes to setting up the health infrastructure anywhere in the union territory of Jammu & Kashmir. It is not so easy that a huge amount of 40 crores has been wasted due to improper planning.

It is important that proper review of the area is taken once the same is selected for setting up any infrastructure in the health sector or in any other sector. The funds need to be utilized in the proper manner and it must be ensured that all the things are put in proper place. Carrying out construction in a flood prone area will lead to a disaster and the consequences of a disaster are very dangerous.

The Whispers and Muted wails of Tral Apple Growers

NAWAZZ IBN AHAD

In the cradle of the Himalayas, where the air is laced with the perfume of blooming orchards, Kashmir's apple trees stretch like a grand tapestry woven by time. From the first tender blossoms of spring to the crimson glow of ripened fruit in autumn, the orchards stand as a breathtaking testament to nature's artistry.

Amidst the rolling valleys and towering peaks of the Himalayas, Kashmir's apple orchards stand as a mesmerizing spectacle, a living symphony of colors, fragrances, and timeless heritage. These lush expanses, where nature breathes life into every petal and leaf, form a dreamlike panorama that captivates the senses and enchants the soul. With each passing season, the landscape transforms, unfolding an ethereal beauty that whispers the secrets of devotion, resilience, and the unbreakable bond between land and labor.

Bathed in the golden glow of dawn, the orchards of Kashmir awaken with an air of tranquility and promise. Spring adorns them with delicate blossoms, a snow-white veil that dances in the breeze, casting an enchanting spell over the valley.

Beneath this picturesque splendor, however, lies a tale of endurance and quiet despair.

In the heart of Kashmir, where the land breathes life into the sweetest of apples, Tral stands as a testament to resilience. Its orchards stretch like a green sea, their branches heavy with promise, their roots deep in the sweat and struggle of those who tend them. For centuries, these lands have been nurtured by hands that know no rest, by hearts that refuse to surrender to hardship and divulged for miles, a canvas of white blossoms in spring and crimson fruit in autumn.

Tral, a land cradled by the vast embrace of nature, thrives under the shade of its sprawl-

ing apple orchards, A region blessed with fertile soil and hardworking hands, stands as a testament to human resilience. Here, men and women cultivate not just apples but dreams, extracting gold from the very dust beneath their feet. Yet, despite their unyielding dedication, they find themselves trapped in an unforgiving system where their labor bears fruit, but their earnings wither away. For generations, this picturesque region has depended solely on its fertile soil, where the hands of its people toil relentlessly to extract prosperity. Unlike other regions blessed with industries, factories, or alternative employment avenues, Tral's heartbeat resonates through the rustling leaves of its apple trees. The people here possess an indomitable spirit, capable of turning mere dust into treasure, yet they find themselves without a vessel to safeguard the fruits of their labor.

The essence of Tral's existence is deeply intertwined with its orchards. Every home, every family, and every breath here echoes the rhythm of agricultural life. From the break of dawn, when the first rays of sunlight kiss the dew-laden leaves, to the dusky twilight when exhausted hands rest, the cycle of cultivation, care, and harvesting continues unbroken. The land rewards their sweat with rich harvests, but despite their unyielding efforts, the prosperity that should have been theirs often slips through their fingers like sand.

Nature has been both a benevolent guardian and an unforgiving adversary. The unpredictable weather patterns have become a looming threat to Tral's orchards, where seasons no longer follow their ancient rhythms. Unseasonal rain, untimely snowfall, and prolonged dry spells cast a shadow of uncertainty over the farmers' toil. A single unexpected storm can shatter months of effort, leaving them

to count their losses in silence. The changing climate, once a whisper, has now turned into a storm, shaking the very foundation of their livelihoods.

Beyond the perils of nature, the absence of proper storage facilities has deepened their predicament. Cold storage units, essential for preserving the yield, remain a distant dream for most orchardists. Without the means to safeguard their produce, they are left at the mercy of middlemen who dictate prices and exploit their desperation. The hard-earned harvest, plucked with care and nurtured with sweat, is often sold at throwaway prices, rendering their struggle an unending cycle of survival rather than progress.

The hands that nurture the orchards with unwavering dedication are often shackled by an unjust system. The market dynamics, controlled by traders and commission agents, ensure that the primary beneficiaries of this lucrative trade are not the ones who toil in the fields. The farmers, despite their ceaseless labor, find themselves grappling with financial instability, trapped in a web of dependency where their earnings are dictated by external forces rather than the value of their produce.

Transporting the yield from Tral to distant markets presents another relentless battle. What should have been a seamless bridge between the orchards and the marketplace turns into an arduous journey filled with obstacles. The absence of a streamlined transportation system further diminishes the profitability of the farming community, pushing them deeper into economic uncertainty.

While government policies and agricultural schemes exist on paper, their impact on the ground remains questionable. Subsidies, financial aid, and developmental projects often fail to reach the hands that need them the most. The promises of infrastructural

development, better storage solutions, and fair market access remain unfulfilled, leaving the orchardists with little choice but to navigate their struggles alone. Their calls for intervention echo in the corridors of bureaucracy, yet concrete support remains elusive.

Despite these adversities, the spirit of Tral's people remains unshaken. Their determination is carved into the bark of their apple trees, their resilience rooted deep within the soil they till. They do not seek miracles but only the basic means to safeguard their livelihood. Their sweat has already turned soil into gold, yet the absence of proper mechanisms to store and channel their earnings leaves them vulnerable.

Amidst these tribulations, the hope for change lingers. The need for cold storage units, transparent market systems, and better infrastructure is more pressing than ever. If empowered with the right resources, the farmers of Tral have the potential to not only sustain themselves but also elevate the entire region into a beacon of agricultural prosperity.

The story of Tral is one of perseverance in the face of relentless challenges. It is a saga of sweat, sacrifice, and an undying belief in the land. The orchards that define this region are more than just a source of income—they are a testament to the undeterred spirit of its people. The dream is not just to harvest apples but to ensure that the fruits of their labor are rightfully theirs, that the diamonds they extract from the soil are not lost to an unforgiving system. Tral does not seek charity; it seeks justice for its hardworking people, a fair chance to thrive, and the means to transform their toil into lasting prosperity.

The people of Tral have mastered the art of nurturing the earth, yet they struggle to reap the benefits of their sweat. Roads have been black-

topped, yet the cost of transporting their yield to markets is an unbearable burden. The journey from orchard to consumer is riddled with middlemen, commissions, and logistical costs that eat away at their already meager profits.

The betrayal runs deeper. The very leaders they have voted for, time and again, have ascended to power only to abandon them. For decades—perhaps even centuries—the people of Tral have placed their trust in those who promised progress, only to be met with neglect. Whether it is infrastructure, horticulture, or agriculture, rural Tral has remained an afterthought in the corridors of power. Promises have been made and forgotten, leaving behind nothing but disillusionment.

Today, a sense of helplessness prevails. The people who once believed in change now find themselves clapping for a different hand. The LG administration, despite being an outsider to local politics, has begun to show signs of development that their own elected representatives failed to deliver. The irony is bitter—those they empowered with their votes left them abandoned, while a distant administration has become their only ray of hope. It is as if the people of Tral have been crowned kings, yet left without a kingdom. They have orchards but no fair market, hands full of harvest but no means to secure their earnings. Their struggle is not just against nature but against an entrenched system that has refused to uplift them.

The time has come for real change. The voices of Tral's orchardists must no longer be drowned in political rhetoric. Their labor should not be in vain. Their sacrifices should not be ignored. The day Tral's farmers are empowered to control their own destiny, the orchards will not just bear apples—they will bear a future worth living for.

Woman led development

JYOTI VIJ
Director General, FICCI

India's development narrative has undergone a remarkable metamorphosis over the past decade, and one of the most encouraging aspects of this journey is the remarkable evolution in the role of women in nation's growth story. Today, we can very proudly say that 'Nari Shakti' forms the heart of India's growth agenda. India is not only empowering women at the grassroot levels but is paving the way to harness their leadership as architects of a Viksit Bharat.

The shift from viewing women as beneficiaries of development to recognizing them as drivers of change is underpinned by a comprehensive bouquet of government schemes and initiatives. These policies, designed under a life continuum approach, are playing a pivotal role in enhancing the lives of women, ensuring they receive support from early childhood through education, to dignified living, motherhood, financial independence, and economic integration.

Educational and nutritional support schemes, such as Beti Bachao Beti Padhao and Sukanya Samridhi Yojana, have contributed significantly to bridging gender disparities in education. The initiatives have not only helped improve the sex ratio at birth but also laid the groundwork for a more gender-balanced society.

Furthermore, initiatives like the Anganwadi system and Poshan Abhiyaan have played vital roles in securing the health

and well-being of women and children. These programs are ensuring that women and young girls receive the nutrition and education they need to build a strong foundation for their future.

Health and sanitation schemes have also made a profound impact on improving the quality of life for women. The Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana, for instance, has provided over 10.3 crore LPG connections across the country, reducing the health risks associated with traditional cooking fuels. The Swachh Bharat Mission has constructed 11.8 crore toilets, significantly improving hygiene and safety for women. These efforts have long-term implications for women's productivity.

Among the most transformative initiatives is the Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana-National Rural Livelihood Mission (DAY-NRLM). This scheme has significantly empowered economically weaker households - especially rural women and communities. As of January 31, 2025, over 10.05 crore households have been mobilized into approximately 90.87 lakh Self-Help Groups (SHGs). Further, more than 6 lakh SHG members have been trained as Community Resource Persons (CRPs) in various roles—ranging from Pashu Sakhi and Krishi Sakhi to Bank Sakhi, Bima Sakhi, and Poshan Sakhi. These efforts have provided women not only with financial stability but also the confidence to take on leadership roles within their communities.

The nation's rapid growth is being fuelled by innovation

and entrepreneurship. Initiatives such as "Make in India" and "Digital India" are not only transforming India's economic landscape but are also creating new opportunities for women. India, now recognized as the world's third-largest startup ecosystem, is witnessing a surge in women-led enterprises. Initiatives like the Pradhan Mantri MUDRA Yojana (PMMY) and Stand-Up India have been instrumental in fostering this trend.

Labor force participation among women has witnessed a discernible improvement with targeted initiatives like the Palna Scheme and the Working Women's Hostel Scheme. These programs are aimed at addressing two most significant barriers faced by working women: care work and accommodation.

Despite these strides, establishing a holistic, quality care ecosystem in the country is urgently needed. While the government is making commendable progress in bridging gaps in child and elderly care facilities, challenges remain. An integrated approach is essential—one that not only strengthens physical infrastructure but also implements a robust policy framework and quality assurance mechanisms.

For example, government may consider forming a statutory body to certify daycare centers and regularly monitor their quality to ensure standardization. Additionally, a special tax exemption upto a defined limit for working women for expenses incurred on childcare (for children upto the age of 5 years) will further support women's

participation in the economy.

Moreover, policies encouraging women's participation in blue collar jobs such as working during night shifts with adequate provision of safety measures need to be more widely emulated by States.

The government has also made strides in political and digital empowerment of women as well. Digital initiatives like PMGDISHA are enabling rural women to leverage technology for financial independence. The emergence of AI, blockchain, and fintech is creating new roads for women in STEM fields, with initiatives like Women in Science and Engineering-KIRAN (WISE-KIRAN) and Gender Advancement for Transforming Institutions (GATI). On the political front, passage of the Women's Reservation Bill has paved the way for greater representation in legislative bodies, ensuring that women's voices are heard at every level of governance.

The transformative impact of these government schemes is evident in the rising number of women leaders, entrepreneurs, and change-makers across the country. Empowered women are not only shaping their destinies but are also driving socioeconomic progress. In fact, women led development has been one of the key priorities for organisations such as FICCI and has been identified as an imperative for Viksit Bharat.

The journey towards women-led development is ongoing, and its success will depend on the collective and continued efforts of both the government, and the private sector.

Mental Health: The Cornerstone of a Fulfilling Life

SYED MUSTAFA AHMAD

If anybody asks me which thing matters the most, my answer is mental health. It is the only type of health that is the fulcrum of a satisfied life. It is difficult to define what it is. However, the main thing about it is that it is the foundation stone for a peaceful life.

In the present world, when mental health is at risk of getting eroded permanently, and there is cent percent chance that the time is not far away when there will be floods of people with mental health issues, it is important to throw light on this crucial topic. Moreover, keeping that future disaster in mind, it has become necessary to bring this issue into the public domain.

In our conservative society, talking about mental health is seen as taboo. Discussing it in the public domain brings unwanted frustration, and people are burdened with endless questions and queries.

In 2022, I faced the worst nightmare of my life. My mental health became the first victim of that nightmare. My whole life became hellish, and I was unable to come to terms with it for two years. I am still struggling to rescue myself from my own thoughts and the thoughts of others. The dent made in the body of the vehicle of my life is so deep that no amount of experience and time spent brings any positive result. However, here lies the problem. I am trying to recover as soon as possible. I have not given up. I fight against the onslaught of mental frustrations with an optimistic attitude.

Keeping my own fight against mental frustrations in mind, let us briefly discuss the benefits of mental health. The first is a blissful life. Being mentally healthy means a person is

able to live his or her life peacefully. In the midst of storms, he or she is able to navigate through them with their head raised and their morale at the topmost level. Storms do leave dents, but a person's attractive personality, in the form of mental toughness, gives them an edge over brutal storms, allowing them to emerge victorious.

The second is understanding the purpose of life. A person who is mentally fit can understand the nuances of life. A mentally stable person is able to see both sides of the coin—the good and the bad. Every moment enables them to introspect quietly and deeply. While being involved in worldly affairs, they rise above daily trifles and dig deep within themselves to remove the worldly layers of dirt and discover the true purpose of life.

The third is being an inspiration to others. A mentally stable person serves as a living example for others to follow. Their attractive personality illuminates the path for others, brightening the world for those who have fallen into despair. Such is the positive effect of mental health that their example becomes one to be emulated forever.

The fourth and last is the happiness of the Creator. A person who is able to control their thoughts can truly know their Creator. A brain blessed with positive thoughts and the power to unravel the knotty threads of earthly life is in the good books of God. Their attitude is liked by the Creator, who blesses them with happiness in both worlds.

In light of the above-mentioned facts, it becomes crystal clear how essential mental health is for everyone. Now, the ball is in our court to decide how to make ourselves mentally fit.

Dr. Rafeeq Masoodi (IBS) : A Visionary in Broadcasting, Literature, and Cultural Renaissance

SANJAY PANDITA

Dr. Rafeeq Masoodi (Indian Broadcast Services), is not just a name; it is a towering legacy in the realms of broadcasting, literature, and cultural renaissance. His life's journey, woven intricately with dedication, resilience, and intellectual brilliance, reflects the power of perseverance and an unyielding commitment to his roots. A visionary in every sense of the word, he has transformed the landscape of media, art, and literature, leaving an indelible imprint on generations to come. From his humble beginnings in the picturesque valley of Kashmir to his meteoric rise in the corridors of India's most prestigious broadcasting institutions, his story is an inspiration for those who believe in the transformative power of knowledge and creativity.

Born in the serene town of Dangiwachha, Rafiabadd, Sopore, nestled in the heart of Jammu & Kashmir, Dr. Masoodi's early years were steeped in the vibrant cultural and linguistic heritage of the region. Even as a young boy, he exhibited an extraordinary passion for learning, a thirst for knowledge that would go on to define his journey. While most of his peers followed conventional academic paths, he took the road less traveled. A remarkable transition from science to Hindi literature in his pre-university days at Sopore College might have seemed improbable, but it was only the beginning of his extraordinary odyssey. Starting with the very basics of Hindi, a language unfamiliar to him at the time, and later earning a doctorate in it, all while securing a third division in his B.A., defied the norms of academic success. Yet, he accomplished what many thought was impossible—earning his Ph.D. from Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU), a dream institution for scholars in the 1970s.

His academic brilliance was evident in his research pursuits, particularly in comparative and analytical studies. His M.Phil. thesis, "Kashmiri Kavi Shams Faqir aur Jaysi ka Tulnatmak Adhyaan," explored the deep interconnections between Kashmiri and Hindi poetry, while his doctoral dissertation, "Musalmano ka Hindi Kavita ko Yogdaan," showcased his keen insight into the contribution of Muslim poets to Hindi literature. His work was not just academic; it was a bridge between cultures, a testament to his belief in the power of literature to unite people across linguistic and regional boundaries.

Dr. Masoodi's journey into broadcasting began in

1985 when he joined Vividh Bharti, Mumbai, as a Programme Executive. From the very start, his innate storytelling prowess and flair for crafting engaging content distinguished him. With an unwavering passion for the medium, he took on increasingly challenging assignments, leaving his creative imprint across stations in Ahmedabad, Shillong, Srinagar, and Panjim, Goa.

A career spanning 34 years, marked by 16 postings, speaks volumes of his dedication and versatility. Widely traveled and deeply immersed in the evolving world of radio, Dr. Masoodi became not just a broadcaster but a maestro of the spoken word, shaping narratives that resonated with audiences across India.

His return to Radio Kashmir in 1989 was more than just a homecoming; it was an opportunity to contribute meaningfully to Kashmiri culture and heritage through the powerful medium of radio.

His influence in the



him six consecutive awards for Best Director of Commercial Broadcasting Services in India, a rare feat in the industry. Under his guidance, Radio Kashmir and

into Kashmiri—an achievement that further cemented his reputation as a linguistic bridge-builder. Yet, it is in his original poetry collection, Panun Dod Panin Dug, that his creative spirit truly soars. Widely celebrated for its depth and emotional resonance, the collection has transcended linguistic boundaries, finding expression in 16 Indian languages, including Hindi, English, Assamese, Gujarati, Punjabi, Rajasthani, Malayalam, Tamil, Bengali, and Dogri. With ongoing translations into Kannada and Konkani, his work continues to weave a tapestry of shared emotions and cultural unity, reaffirming the timeless and universal appeal of his poetic

One of his most remarkable contributions to Kashmiri literature is his Hindi translation of Pran Kishor's Kashmiri novel, "Sheen Te Vate Paed," published as "Barfs Par Baney Padh Chinh." This work introduced Hindi readers to the rich storytelling traditions of Kashmir, breaking linguistic barriers and fostering a deeper understanding of Kashmiri culture.

Doordarshan became vibrant hubs of artistic and cultural expression, providing a platform for local talent and ensuring that the unique voice of Kashmir reached a broader audience.

Parallel to his illustrious career in broadcasting, Dr. Masoodi's literary contributions have been equally monumental. A prolific writer, translator, and poet, his works reflect a deep commitment to preserving and promoting the Kashmiri language and literature. His translation of Bhisham Sahni's "Tamas" into Kashmiri was a groundbreaking endeavor, earning him the prestigious Sahitya Akademi Award in 2005. This work was not merely a translation; it was a cultural conversation between two literary traditions, making a seminal Hindi novel accessible to Kashmiri readers.

His literary brilliance shines through in his masterful translation of Vishnu Prabhakar's Ardhnarishwar

ensuring that the beauty of Kashmiri literature is appreciated beyond its native speakers.

In a rapidly globalizing world, where regional languages and cultures often face the risk of being overshadowed by dominant linguistic and cultural narratives, Dr. Masoodi's efforts serve as a beacon of resistance and revival. His advocacy for the Kashmiri language, through translation, poetry, and cultural programming, underscores his deep-rooted belief that language is not merely a medium of communication but a vessel of identity, history, and collective memory.

As the Secretary of the J&K Academy of Art, Culture, and Languages, Dr. Masoodi orchestrated a cultural renaissance that transformed the landscape of art and literature

These festivals not only showcased local talent but also placed Kashmiri cinema on the national stage. Recognizing the power of cinema as a cultural force, he introduced the concept of Annual Film Awards, a landmark initiative that continues to celebrate excellence in regional filmmaking.

One of his most historic achievements was his role in securing infrastructure for cultural institutions. His efforts led to the allocation of BOSE buildings for the Academy and the acquisition of a heritage building for IMPA Jammu. This legacy of institution-building remains unmatched, highlighting his ability to translate vision into tangible results.

Dr. Masoodi's illustrious journey is adorned with prestigious accolades, each a testament to his unparalleled contributions to

laya, Shri Madhukar Dighe ji, for his remarkable efforts in the upliftment and proclamation of Hindi in the Northeast.

Most recently, in 2024, he received the Sharaf-e-Kamraaz Award, the highest literary honor by Adbi Markaz Kamraz, for his immense contributions to the Kashmiri language and literature. This accolade serves as yet another reminder of his enduring influence on the literary and cultural landscape.

Even after his retirement from active service, Dr. Masoodi continues to be an intellectual force, mentoring young writers, broadcasters, and cultural enthusiasts. His belief in the power of storytelling as a means of preserving identity and history drives him to remain engaged with literary and cultural organizations. His work is not confined to the past; it is a living legacy, a guiding force that will inspire generations to come.

The story of Dr. Masoodi is not just one of professional success but of an undying commitment to the preservation, propagation, and celebration of India's cultural and linguistic diversity. Whether through the airwaves of All India Radio, the screens of Doordarshan, or the pages of his books, his influence permeates multiple layers of Indian society.

Even today, his voice echoes in the corridors of broadcasting, his words resonate in the pages of literature, and his vision continues to guide those who seek to blend creativity with cultural responsibility. In an era where media is constantly evolving, and regional literature fights for its rightful place, Dr. Rafeeq Ahmed Masoodi's contributions remain as relevant and influential as ever.

As he continues to engage with literary circles, cultural organizations, and media platforms, his legacy is still in the making. His journey is a reminder that true success is not measured merely by positions held or awards received, but by the lasting impact one leaves on the hearts and minds of people.

Dr. Rafeeq Ahmed Masoodi remains a luminary—an intellectual force whose contributions will be studied, cherished, and celebrated for generations to come. His life and work are an ode to the power of knowledge, storytelling, and cultural stewardship, ensuring that the rich heritage he has dedicated himself to will never fade into obscurity but will continue to inspire, educate, and enlighten.

The writer can be reached at sanjaypanditasp@gmail.com



in the region. His leadership saw the filling of 200 vacant posts, facilitating the recruitment of talented individuals dedicated to cultural preservation. Additionally, his efforts resulted in 300 long-overdue promotions, ensuring that many officials witnessed career growth before their retirement. His visionary approach led to the expansion of Academy offices at the district level, bringing cultural resources closer to local artists and writers.

His tenure



His translations serve as a literary bridge, enabling dialogue between different linguistic communities and

marked by unprecedented initiatives, including the organization of Jammu and Kashmir's first-ever film festivals in both Jammu and Srinagar.

The Critical Role of Resource Persons in the Implementation of NEP 2020

MUNTASHIR KIFAYAT

A resource person is an expert who provides additional support and information to enhance teaching and learning, bringing real-world expertise and practical insight.

Resource persons in school education are key performance indicators in assessing the implementation of the policies envisaged in NEP 2020. Therefore, the approach of NEP 2020 is to strengthen this important performance indicator.

A resource person in the teaching-learning process plays a pivotal role in uplifting education standards for both students and

teachers. The key aspects of their role are:

- They assist in developing lesson plans and creating effective educational materials.
- Resource persons, in the form of Cluster Resource Centres (CRCs), often possess specialized techniques and knowledge in their subject areas. They provide guidance to deepen understanding.
- Resource persons facilitate workshops and discussions and encourage critical thinking.
- They help in providing access to various educational resources (books, articles, online materials, etc.), enhancing the learning environment.

- RPs ensure that learning objectives are met by developing evaluation tools.

- RPs promote a more integrated approach to learning as they foster collaboration among educators, students, and the community.

One of the aspects of NEP 2020 is strengthening cluster resource persons. Resource persons are the main unit for training and providing on-the-spot support to schools and teachers.

The government of J&K has started an exhaustive exercise for the implementation of NEP 2020. The functioning of these resource persons should be revamped to align with NEP 2020.

There should be proper filtration of the people deputed as RPs at the zonal, district, and state levels. Some teachers have been resource persons for a decade, regardless of whether their credentials are doubtful or not. Some are satisfied with doing clerical jobs in offices, neglecting the roles assigned to them. An RP who is supposed to be in the classroom helping develop study materials is instead arranging Zoom meetings on behalf of offices for population surveys, etc.

The selection of RPs should be properly handled. The resource person at DIET and SCERT should be a researcher and highly acquainted with new pedagogies

of learning, more so than a teacher working at school. But unfortunately, in some cases, it is the other way around.

At zonal and other levels, there should be screening and proper selection of RPs, keeping away the echelons of power, interference by teachers' forums, and undue influence. The selection should be made every two years, as envisaged in government policy, in letter and spirit.

Over the years, national surveys like ASER 2024 have depicted a grim picture of the learning outcomes of students in government schools in J&K Union Territory. For this, resource persons are mainly

responsible for failing to overcome the learning gaps of students. The outcomes have shown, and it is widely believed, that most teachers are not well-trained or acquainted with new pedagogies and technologies.

The resource group should be in constant touch with teachers. They should visit schools and monitor academics continuously. In the context of NEP 2020, the Government of India lays stress on resource groups visiting schools to monitor and provide on-site academic support and send reports on a periodic basis. As per the policy, each block and cluster resource coordinator is supposed to be in the school.

Govt sponsors 93 Industrial Units for employment generation in Padder-Nagseni in 2024-25: Dy CM

Nearly, 454 artisans registered for artisan card in Constituency

HT News Network

Jammu, March 13: The government has sponsored 93 MICRO Industrial Units besides facilitating 34 units under PMEGP and JKREGP schemes for employment generation in Padder-Nagseni Constituency in the 2024-25 fiscal.

Deputy Chief Minister, Surinder Choudhary, informed this while replying to a question raised by Sunil Kumar Sharma in the Legislative Assembly.

He informed that the department has registered the pass out trainees as Weavers and Artisans, held six awareness camps, registered 78 Artisans for Artisan Cards and 55 for Pehchan Card for availing benefits under various schemes, helping their on-boarding on e-commerce platforms.

The Minister said that the Entrepreneurship Awareness Programmes (EAPs) have been organized and 12 candidates from Padder Nagseni Constituency have been provided capacity building under the Hausla Programme in the current financial year. Besides, 2137 applications have been received under the Vishwakarma scheme.

He informed that 329 artisans and 125 weavers have been registered in Padder-Nagseni Constituency who can avail benefit of the schemes being implemented by the department under Artisan cards.

The Deputy Chief Minister said that various schemes are being implemented by the department to support the local handicrafts, particularly Pashmina weaving and other traditional crafts in the Constituency.

He said that the facilities included



10 sanctioned training centres in Kishtwar district which provide training in various crafts viz; Crewel, Staple, Sozni, Carpet weaving,

wheat Straw Craft and Handloom Weaving, of which, 01 training centre of Wheat Straw Craft is functional in the Padder-Nagseni Con-

stituency. He added that besides training programmes, the department facilitates handholding of the weavers and the artisans through Credit Card Scheme 2020, Weaver Mudra Scheme, Karkhandar Scheme 2021, registration of cooperatives under Financial Support scheme and other initiatives.

The Deputy Chief Minister said that 27 cases have been sponsored to various banks from Padder-Nagseni Constituency, of which, 15 cases have been sanctioned till date. He added that 03 cases have been sponsored to various banks under the Weavers MUDRA Scheme 2015 during the past three years.

He said that about 14 Cooperatives have been registered from the Padder sub division covering 154 artisans/weavers under the Financial Support Scheme for Cooperatives of Handicrafts and Handloom Depart-

ment during the past three years. These artisans/weavers were practicing various traditional crafts viz; mix embroidery, stone jewellery, crewel embroidery, wheat straw crafts and weaving. An amount of Rs. 7.00 lakh has been disbursed among these cooperatives till date as first installment, he added.

He said that the department has also facilitated the participation of 04 Industrial Handicrafts Cooperatives from Padder Nagseni in National Level Exhibitions and 02 Industrial Handicrafts Cooperative Societies in Bhaderwah Fest, while 02 crafts viz; Kishtwari Loi and Wheat Straw Products are under submission to NABARD.

He added that a patch of land measuring 8 kanal has been identified at Matti, Padder for promotion of the Hotel Industry.

اطلاع عام

ہر خاص و عام کو اطلاع دی جاتی ہے کہ ادھار کاڈ مین میری تاریخ پیدائش 04/05/1965 انراج ہوئی ہے جبکہ میری اصل تاریخ پیدائش مطابق پاسپورٹ 04/03/1972 ہے اب اس کی دستگی کرانی مطلوب ہے کسی کو کوئی عذر ہو تو وہ سات یوم کے اندر اندر دفتر ہذا میں پیش کرے بعد از معاد کوئی عذر قبول نہیں ہوگا

المستہر

مہتابہ بیگم زوجہ محمد یوسف لون

ساکن پھلگام کشمیر

Over 15 lakh kanal retrieved from encroachers in Kathua, Samba districts: Sakeena Itoo

HT News Network

Jammu, March 13: Minister for Health and Education, Sakeena Itoo, today said that out of total 1727241 Kanal and 8 Marla illegally occupied land, 1539662 Kanal and 15.5 Marla land has been retrieved, so far, in Kathua and Samba districts.

The Minister, who was replying on behalf of Chief Minister, Omar Abdullah, to a question raised by Rajiv Jasrotia in the Legislative Assembly.

She said that the eviction process has already been initiated as per the relevant rules for retrieval of remaining 313645 Kanal and 12 Marla land worth Rs. 18,049.6 crore from the encroachers.

Sharing details, the Minister said that the land under illegal occupation is being retrieved in Ghatti Patwar, Patwar Halqa Nanan, Forelain, Bhagthali Patwar, Taraf Bhajwal and Taraf Manjli, however, no state land has been encroached in Korepunnu village of Samba.

Regarding conversion of Agriculture land for industrial and commercial purposes, the Minister said that a total of 6098.53 Kanal of land has been converted for industrial and commercial purposes in Kathua and Samba districts of Jammu. She informed the House that total conversion of Agriculture land for industrial purpose was 4729 Kanal and 19.33 Marla while 559.17 Kanal land has been converted for commercial purposes in Kathua and Jasrota areas. Similarly, 156 Kanal and 07 Marla of Agriculture land has been converted and utilized for industrial purposes while 654 Kanal and 10 Marla for commercial purposes in Samba, she informed the House.

She informed that the Revenue Department has not transferred state land to any private individual for setting up of Industrial Estates, however, on the basis of intends placed by the Industries & Commerce Department, land measuring 12260 Kanal and 03 Marla has been transferred to Industries & Commerce Department in various districts during the past two years. She said that the State land measuring 129 Kanal has been allotted to PMAY (G) beneficiaries on leased basis during the past two years. Legislators; RS Pathania and Narinder Singh raised supplementaries. She said that the State land measuring 129 Kanal has been allotted to PMAY (G) beneficiaries on leased basis during the past two years.



Awareness programme on Drug Abuse held at GDC Sumbal

HT News Network

BANDIPORA, MARCH 13: with an aim to educate students about the perils of drug abuse and promote a drug-free society, an awareness programme on Drug Abuse was today organized at Government Degree College (GDC) Sumbal. The pro-

gramme held under the patronage of principal GDC Sumbal, Prof. Dr. Shabeena Iqbal Shawl, aligned with the broader objectives of the 'Nasha Mukht Bharat Abhiyan'.

The event was led by Manzoor Ahmad Parey Convener Nasha Mukht Bharat committee. In his address Manzoor Ahmad highlighted the devastating effects of drug addiction

on individuals, families, and society at large. He deliberated on the critical role of education and community involvement in preventing drug abuse, urging students to act as ambassadors of change by adopting and promoting healthy, drug-free lifestyles. The event concluded with a strong call to action, encouraging participants to spread awareness.

PUBLIC NOTICE

I want to change the name of my son from Mohammad Ishaq Parry S/o Mohammad Abass Parry Mothers Name: Hajra to Uzair Ali Parry S/o Mohammad Abass Parry Mother's Name: Hajra who is studying in class 9th, Admission No. 360 D.O.B: 25.04.2010. In this regard, if anybody having any objection then he/she may contact Govt. Girls Middle School Gund Hassi Bhat Srinagar Kashmir within a period of 07 days from the date of publication of this notice. After that no objection shall be entertained.

Mohammad Abass Parry F/o Uzair Ali Parry
Mother's Name: Hajra

GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU & KASHMIR

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

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

PUBLIC NOTICE

The Registrar Births and Deaths (Block Development Officer Wagoora)/ chokedar has submitted case file pertaining to Birth of HAJI ALI PANDITH D/O REYAZ AHMAD PANDITH R/O ATHOORA RESHIPORA Tehsil KREERI Distt. Baramulla having verified the date of Birth as 03/04/2016 and event has been shown to be occurred at HOME for issuance of delay order. In this connection, if anyone have any objection to the issuance of delay order of Birth certificate shall present his/her claim this office within 07 days, after that no objection shall be entertained

Executive Magistrate
1st Class KREERI

GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU & KASHMIR

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

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

PUBLIC NOTICE

The Registrar Births and Deaths (Block Development Officer Wagoora)/ chokedar has submitted case file pertaining to Birth of SANIA NISAR KHAN D/O NISAR AHMAD KHAN R/O WARIPORA BLA Tehsil KREERI Distt. Baramulla having verified the date of Birth as 10/02/2008 and event has been shown to be occurred at SDH KREERI for issuance of delay order. In this connection, if anyone have any objection to the issuance of delay order of Birth certificate shall present his/her claim this office within 07 days, after that no objection shall be entertained

Executive Magistrate
1st Class KREERI

GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU & KASHMIR

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

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

PUBLIC NOTICE

The Registrar Births and Deaths (Block Development Officer Wagoora)/ chokedar has submitted case file pertaining to Birth of AASIM GULZAR D/O GULZAR AHMAD BHAT R/O ALAHPORA Tehsil WAGOORA Distt. Baramulla having verified the date of Birth as 17/05/2021 and event has been shown to be occurred at SDH KREERI for issuance of delay order. In this connection, if anyone have any objection to the issuance of delay order of Birth certificate shall present his/her claim this office within 07 days, after that no objection shall be entertained

Executive Magistrate
1st Class KREERI

GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU & KASHMIR

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

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

PUBLIC NOTICE

The Registrar Births and Deaths (Block Development Officer Wagoora)/ chokedar has submitted case file pertaining to Birth of AASIM GULZAR D/O GULZAR AHMAD BHAT R/O ALAHPORA Tehsil WAGOORA Distt. Baramulla having verified the date of Birth as 17/05/2021 and event has been shown to be occurred at SDH KREERI for issuance of delay order. In this connection, if anyone have any objection to the issuance of delay order of Birth certificate shall present his/her claim this office within 07 days, after that no objection shall be entertained

Executive Magistrate
1st Class KREERI

Office Of The Executive Engineer Jal Shakti (PHE) Deptt.

Ground Water Division Srinagar

Baghi-Ali-Mardan, Nowshara Srinagar.

E-mail:- phgwd@yahoo.com,

Tel./Fax No:- 0194-2411285

Extension Notice 1st

Subject: 1. Construction of Machine drilled hand Pump well at Rakhi Brah Ichnard Ward No. 2.
2. Construction of Tube well near Masjid Abu Baker Wodder Mohalla.

Reference: This office e-NIT No.69-JS-PHE/GWDS/Mech. of 2024-25, issued vide endorsement No: JS-PHE/GWDS/24-25/Corrs./13212-23, dated: 04-03-2025. Bearing Tender ID No. 2025_PHE_273590_1.

Due to "Poor Response" for the above mentioned works advertised vide e-NIT No. and Tender ID No's under reference. Which was scheduled to be downloaded till 13-03-2025 Up-to 11:00 AM are extended as per the details given below: -

S.No.	Item	Fresh Date
1.	Period of submission of bids	20-03-2025 Up-to 11:00 AM
2.	Date of opening of tenders	21-03-2025 11.00 AM

NOTE:

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

Sd/-

Executive Engineer

Jal Shakti (PHE) Deptt.

Ground Water Division Srinagar.

DIPK-12978/24

Dated: 13-03-2025

OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT MAGISTRATE ANANTNAG JUDICIAL SECTION

NO OMA/Judicial/24-25/2198-2212

Dated 12082025

Subject: - Haj-1446 (Hijri) 2025 - Conduct of Second Phase of Orientation /Training Programme for selected pilgrims of Haj-2025.

PRESS NOTE

In pursuance of the communication received from Executive Officer Haj Committee Jammu and Kashmir on 11/03/2025 regarding imparting training about Manasik-e-Haj and other logistics at District level for Haj pilgrims of Haj-1446 (H) 2025, accordingly pilgrims of Haj-2025 (Haj- 1446) are requested to attend the second phase of orientation/training programme strictly as per the following schedule:

Date	Time	Venue	Pilgrims of Tehsil/area
18-03-2025	18-03-2025	Govt. Degree College Women Auditorium, Anantnag	All pilgrims of the District.

DIPK-13001/24
Date: Mar 13 2025

Addl District Magistrate
Anantnag

نائب تحصیلدار پھلگام

از دفتر نائب تحصیلدار پھلگام

درخواست منجانب محمد یوسف لون ولد عبداللہ گوستی و مدر اسلام و مسکن یوسف و روینما یوسف و مسبا جان پسران محمد یوسف گوستی ساکن لدو پھلگام بحصول سڈول ٹرایب سٹ سرٹفکٹ

اشتہار پمرا داگاہی

زعنوان مضمون ساہلان نے ایک درخواست بحصول سٹ سرٹفکٹ دفتر حرا میں پیش کی ہے رپوٹ کے مطابق ساہلان کو جرمنی سے تعلق رکھتے ہیں اور ساہلان کا تہذیب مندر پیر زیل افراد ہے

محمد یوسف گوستی ولد عبداللہ 43 سال کا ملازم
سید محمد چوہدری 40 سال کا ملازم
مدرس اسلام پسر 19 سال کا
مسکان یوسف دختر 17 سال کا
روینما یوسف 18 سال کا
مسبا جان 18 سال کا

16 اس طرح ساہلان کا تہذیب 06 افراد پر مشتمل ہے اوکھل امدنی مطابق لپس ہے 116 مرکز سرٹفکٹ اہلکار کے تہذیب میں کسی کو کوئی عذر ہو تو وہ سات یوم کے اندر اندر دفتر حرا میں پیش کرے بعد از معاد کوئی عذر قبول نہیں ہوگا

نائب تحصیلدار پھلگام

اطلاع عام

ہر خاص و عام کو اطلاع دی جاتی ہے کہ ادھار کاڈ مین میرا نام Mohd Yousuf Lone انراج ہوا ہے جبکہ میرا اصل نام مطابق پاسپورٹ Mohammad Yousuf Lone اب اس کی دستگی کرانی مطلوب ہے کسی کو کوئی عذر ہو تو وہ سات یوم کے اندر اندر دفتر ہذا میں پیش کرے بعد از معاد کوئی عذر قبول نہیں ہوگا

المستہر

محمد یوسف لون ولد غلام رسول لون

ساکن پھلگام کشمیر

CUKashmir, J&K Cultural Academy holds seminar on “Jammu Kashmir Ka Nissaie Urdu Adab”

■ HT News Network

Ganderbal, Mar 13: In commemoration of International Women's Day, the Department of Urdu, Central University of Kashmir (CUKashmir), in collaboration with the Jammu and Kashmir Academy of Art, Culture, and Languages, organized a seminar “Jammu Kashmir Ka Nissaie Urdu Adab” (Women's Role in Promoting Urdu Literature of Jammu and Kashmir) at the university's Green Campus on Thursday.

The seminar highlighted the invaluable contributions of eminent

women poets and writers, including Dr. Taranum Riyaz, Prof. Ayesha Mas-tooora, Abida Ahmad, Syeda Nasreen Naqash, Shafiq Parveen, Wajidah Tabassum, Shabnum Ashai, and others, whose literary works have played a pivotal role in shaping and enriching Urdu literature in the region.

Delivering the keynote address, Mrs. Rukhsana Jabeen, former Director, All India Radio, Srinagar, lauded the immense literary contributions of women in Jammu and Kashmir. She emphasized that their works have not only enriched the region's literary landscape but have also paved the



way for future generations of writers and poets. “Their writings serve as a bridge between the past and the

present, preserving the essence of Urdu literature while addressing contemporary themes such as identity,

feminism, and Kashmir's unique socio-political milieu,” she said.

Prominent fiction writer Dr. Nilofar Naaz Nahvi underscored the often overlooked yet significant role of Kashmiri women in Urdu literature. “Women poets, fiction writers, literary critics, and journalists have vividly portrayed the socio-political, cultural, and personal dimensions of life in the Valley,” she remarked.

In her address, Dr. Kausar Rasool highlighted how women writers have skillfully encapsulated the emotions, experiences, and cultural ethos of Kashmir through their works.

Prof. Irfan Aalam, Head, Department of Urdu, hailed the seminar as a landmark event in recognizing the literary contributions of women. “By bringing together scholars, writers, and poets, this seminar has taken an essential step toward bridging the gap in literary recognition and ensuring that the voices of women in Urdu literature are heard and preserved for future generations,” he stated.

Editor of Shiraz and Urdu, Mr. Saleem Salik, acknowledged the immense contributions of women poets and scholars, noting that their works remain underrepresented.

DC Kupwara reviews implementation of Mission YUVA programme

■ HT News Network

KUPWARA, MARCH 13: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Kupwara, Ayushi Sudan today convened a meeting of concerned officers to review the implementation of Mission YUVA programme in the district.

Addressing the meeting, the DC impressed upon all the officers to work with added zeal and dedication to ensure smooth and successful implementation of the ambitious Mission YUVA programme in the district. She emphasized the need for developing an ecosystem for unemployed education youth to boost entrepreneurship and employment in the district. She also highlighted the role of the Mission



YUVA app, which is integral to the mission's outreach and support services.

The AD Employment briefed the meeting through a detailed Power-Point presentation about the objectives and modalities involved in implementing the Mission YUVA in the district.

Mission YUVA, a youth-centric initiative launched by the J&K Government,

aims to empower young individuals by providing them with various opportunities for skill development, employment and entrepreneurial ventures. It was informed that the objective of the Mission YUVA is to generate new employment opportunities through enterprise creation especially for high-skilled unemployed youth so that they can earn their livelihood with dig-

nity.

Regarding the institutional mechanism for implementing the Mission, it was informed that 20 Small Business Development Units (SBDU) have to be established in the district under the supervision of DC. The role of the SBDU is to identify relevant business activities for the district and create model Detailed Project Reports. Besides, 80 Business Help Desks have to be established at sub divisional level under the supervision of concerned SDMs.

The meeting held a threadbare discussion on various other issues for proper and successful implementation of the Mission YUVA programme in the district. GM DIC Kupwara, CPO, SDM Lolab, AD Employment and other concerned officers were present in

Kupwara Administration Imposes 11-Hour Daily Ban on Mining in Nallah Mawar Under Section 163 BNSS

■ DR.AB QAYOOM

Kupwara, Mar, 13: In Abid to curb illegal mining activities and safeguard public infrastructure, the District Magistrate of Kupwara, Ayushi Sudan (IAS), has imposed restrictions on the extraction of Nallah material from Nallah Mawar between 7:00 PM to 6:00 AM. The order, issued under Section 163 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNSS), will remain in effect for three months. The decision follows concerns over unauthorized mining operations, particularly near bridges, water reservoirs, and other public infrastructures, which pose a threat to both public safety and law & order. The administration has noted that illegal extraction during nighttime hours has been increasing, violating environmental



guidelines and potentially leading to damage to key structures. The order mandates the Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Handwara to ensure strict implementation of these restrictions. Furthermore, the directive aligns with National Green Tribunal (NGT) guidelines and Supreme Court rulings regarding mining regulations. The move is expected to prevent environmental degradation, protect essential infrastructure, and ensure the safety of local residents. The district administration has urged the public to cooperate

with the authorities and report any violations. Copies of the order have been forwarded to relevant officials, including the Divisional Commissioner Kashmir, Director of Geology & Mining, and Additional Deputy Commissioners of Kupwara and Handwara, for necessary action. The District Information Office has been directed to publish the order in leading newspapers and local media platforms to ensure widespread awareness among the public. Section 163 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS), 2023, empowers

Magistrates to issue orders in cases of nuisance or apprehended danger, preventing obstructions, threats to human life, public disturbances, or riots. The Kupwara administration has urged the public to cooperate and report any violations. This strict measure reinforces the district's commitment to environmental conservation, public safety, and infrastructure protection. #everyonehighlights #lowerseveryonehighlights #followseveryone #highlights #LikeFollowShare #everyone #followers #highlights #OmarAbdullah Syed Jahangir Bukhari Er Rashid Office of LG, J&K District Administration Kupwara Divisional Commissioner Office Srinagar Narendra Modi Mir Junaid J&K Worker Party President Omar Abdullah Pc Pandithpora Aip Chakla Pohru

Residents of Woskura Handwara Protest Against Smart Meter Installation, Demand Basic Amenities

■ DR.AB QAYOOM

Handwara, Mar, 13: Hundreds of residents, including men and women, from Woskura village of Handwara took to the streets today, staging a protest against the installation of smart electricity meters. The protestors blocked the Vilgam-Handwara road near Talri Bridge, raising concerns over the Power Development Department's (PDD) decision to introduce smart meters while ignoring pressing civic issues. The agitated residents argued that they have been struggling with inadequate road infrastructure and an acute drinking water crisis. They insisted that the government should prioritize resolving these fundamental issues before moving forward with the smart meter installation.

“We have been suffering due to poor roads and a severe drinking water shortage. Instead of addressing these pressing problems, the administration is imposing smart meters on us,” one of the protestors expressed.

The road blockade disrupted traffic movement, causing inconvenience to commuters. The protestors urged authorities to take immediate action to meet their demands, warning of intensified demonstrations if their concerns were not addressed. In response, the Sub-District Administration of Handwara, along with SDPO Handwara and SHO Handwara, engaged with the demonstrators. The officials assured the residents that their grievances regarding basic amenities, such as road repairs and drinking water supply, would be addressed promptly.

Following the intervention of Handwara Police, the protestors called off their demonstration peacefully, expressing hope that the administration would fulfill its promises and take concrete steps toward improving their living conditions.

Sakeena Itoo extends Holi greetings

■ HT News Network

JAMMU, MARCH 13: Minister for Health and Medical Education, Social Welfare and Education, Sakeena Itoo today extended her heartfelt greetings to the people of Jammu and Kashmir on joyous festival of colours- Holi. In her greetings, Sakeena Itoo that this occasion symbolizes the vibrant colours of our multi-cultural society and diversity. She added that on this joyous occasion let us embrace the spirit of togetherness, spread happiness and strengthen the bonds of harmony in our society. The Minister also prayed for peace, progress and prosperity of entire Jammu and Kashmir.

DC reviews functioning of Jan Aushadhi store of DH Shopian

■ HT News Network

SHOPIAN, MARCH 13: The Deputy Commissioner (DC) Shopian, Shishir Gupta today chaired a meeting to review the performance of the Jan Aushadhi store functioning in the district hospital over the past three years. The chair was informed about the availability of medicines and monthly sales of the store. Keeping in view below par performance of the Store, DC directed CMO and MS DH to ensure that all major and essential medicines remain available at the store at all times so as to enhance the store's performance.

He further stressed the need for regular monitoring of the store affairs to ensure accountability, performance and smooth operations. Furthermore, DC also called for legible



prescription/report writing by all medical practitioners as per MCI/ NMC guidelines and instructed regular prescription audits by the supervising officers. The meeting was attended by ADDC Shopian, Dr. Nasir Ahmad Lone; ADC Shopian, Dr. Zakir Hussain Faaz; CMO Shopian, Medical Superintendent, District Nodal Officer Ayush and BMOs.

Furthermore, DC also called for legible prescription/report writing by all medical practitioners as per MCI/NMC guidelines and instructed regular prescription audits by the supervising officers. The meeting was attended by ADDC Shopian, Dr. Nasir Ahmad Lone; ADC Shopian, Dr. Zakir Hussain Faaz; CMO Shopian, Medical Superintendent.

DC Bandipora reviews status of Court cases

■ HT News Network

BANDIPORA, MARCH 13: The Deputy Commissioner (DC) Bandipora, Manzoor Ahmad Qadri, on Thursday chaired a meeting at mini secretariat to review the status of under process court cases within the district. The meeting discussed various cases pertaining to different departments and focused on addressing the issues related to departments. The DC emphasized the need for timely and serious attention to all court cases from the initial stages. He urged the officers to ensure that proper replies are submitted, based on accurate records and genuine facts.

Qadri stressed the submission of responses for all under process cases within the stipulated time frame provided by the courts.

He also laid thrust on the importance of maintaining transparency



and accountability in dealing with legal matters. The DC directed officers to prioritize the court cases and adhere to deadlines set by the courts for submission of responses.

The meeting was attended by Additional Deputy Commissioner, Zaffar Husson Shawl; Assistant Commissioner Revenue, Assistant Commissioner Development, Litigation Officer and District Officers of the concerned departments besides Sub-Divisional Magistrates (SDM) Sumbal, SDM Gurez and Tehsildar Gurez, attended virtually.

DC Shopian meets Hols of private educational institutions

Directs to strictly adhere to NEP, improve facilities for desired educational outcomes

■ HT News Network

SHOPIAN, MARCH 13: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Shopian, Shishir Gupta today chaired a meeting of officers of the education department and heads of institutions of private educational institutions of the district in order to discuss the issues requiring attention.

Various issues covering New Education Policy (NEP) including maintaining the healthy teacher-student ratio, admission for weaker sections as per Right to Education Act, accommodation matters, admission process and fees, academic and various other non academic matters



were discussed with the head of institutions. The DC called upon all participants to provide their noble services with best possible efficiency and in a professional way. He sought strict adherence to the New Education Policy especially main-

taining teacher-student ratio, admission of students from marginalized and poor sections, etc. He also sought cooperation from them on issues of drug menace and the enforcement of tobacco control within the campuses and surroundings

of educational institutions.

The meeting was attended by ADDC Shopian, Dr. Nasir Ahmad Lone; ADC, Dr. Zakir Hussain Faaz; ACR, CEO, DIO, ZEOs and Head of institutions. Various issues covering New Education Policy (NEP) including maintaining the healthy teacher-student ratio, admission for weaker sections as per Right to Education Act, accommodation matters, admission process and fees, academic and various other non academic matters were discussed with the head of institutions. The DC called upon all participants to provide their noble services with best possible efficiency and in a professional way.

Secretary RDD& PR asks for speedy completion of SBM-G projects in J&K

■ HT News Network

SRINAGAR, MARCH 13: Secretary, Rural Development Department and Panchayati Raj (RDD&PR), Mohammad Aijaz Asad, on Wednesday chaired a review meeting to assess utilisation of funds and physical progress under the Swachh Bharat Mission-Gramin (SBM-G) in Jammu and Kashmir.

The meeting was attended by Director General (DG) Rural Sanitation, Anoo Malhotra, Deputy Director Rural Sanitation Kashmir, Mantasha Binti Rashid, Superintending Engineer REW Kashmir, Aamir Ali, Superintending Engineer REW Jammu, Rajesh Kumar Agastam, Assistant Commissioner Panchayats (ACPs) and Block Development Officers (BDOs).

The meeting, focused on the physical completion and corresponding expenditure for the financial year 2024-25.

The officials presented a detailed



report on the total funds released to Assistant Commissioner Panchayats (ACPs) and Block Development Officers (BDOs) and their respective expenditure. The Secretary reiterated the importance of proper documentation, transparency and daily monitoring of progress at the district level. He stressed that timely execution of sanitation projects is crucial for achieving the goals of Swachh Bharat Mission (Gramin) and improv-

ing rural sanitation across J&K.

The Secretary directed the officials to expedite pending works and ensure judicious utilisation of funds to improve rural sanitation across the UT. The Secretary directed the officials to expedite completion of the ongoing projects and ensure efficient utilisation of funds. He emphasised the need for regular monitoring to achieve sanitation and waste management goals effectively.

The Secretary emphasized the urgency of utilizing pending funds effectively. He directed the ACPs to submit detailed reports within two days outlining the pending bills and anticipated expenditure by March 31. He also instructed the child agencies and BDOs to monitor daily expenditures to ensure effective fund utilisation. Aijaz Asad reiterated government's unwavering commitment towards providing safe, hygienic and dignified living conditions for rural communities.

Srinagar admin organizes awareness programme on 3 New Criminal Laws at SP College

■ HT News Network

SRINAGAR, MARCH 13: Continuing its endeavour to educate the masses on the new three criminal laws viz. Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita 2023, Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita 2023 and the Bharatiya Sakshya Adhiniyam 2023, a mass awareness programme was organized by District Administration on the directions of Deputy Commissioner (DC) Srinagar Dr Bilal Mohi-Ud-Din Bhat at S P College here today.

Additional Deputy Commissioner (DC) Srinagar, Dr. Khalid Hussain Malik was the chief guest on the occasion.

Principal SP College, Prof. (Dr) Farooq Ahmad Mir;



Head Department of Forensic, GMC Srinagar, Prof. (Dr) Arsalan F Rashid; SDPO Kothibagh, Yasir Ahmad; Chief Prosecuting Officer, Mohammad Lateef Lone; Assistant Prosecuting Officer, Angad Shan; Deputy Chief LADC, District Service Legal Authority, Srinagar, Tasneem Kausar; Penal Lawyer, District Service Legal Authority, Gazala

Mumtaz Khan and others participated the awareness programme.

Speaking on the occasion, ADC emphasized the need for creating awareness among the general public regarding transformative reforms having a positive impact on all in general and specifically on the women and children.

He highlighted that the

new criminal laws provide a lot of protection to women and minors through special provisions in the Act.

Other speakers also presented a detailed talk about the three new criminal laws and how they will protect the citizens and ensure transparent and speedy justice. Additional Deputy Commissioner (DC) Srinagar, Dr. Khalid Hussain Malik was the chief guest on the occasion.

Principal SP College, Prof. (Dr) Farooq Ahmad Mir; Head Department of Forensic, GMC Srinagar, Prof. (Dr) Arsalan F Rashid; SDPO Kothibagh, Yasir Ahmad; Chief Prosecuting Officer, Mohammad Lateef Lone; Assistant Prosecuting Officer, Angad Shan; Deputy Chief LADC.

Capacity building programme under BBBP concludes at Budgam

Initiative aimed to equip grassroots-level workers about objectives of the scheme

■ HT News Network

BUDGAM, MARCH 12: A capacity-building programme to sensitize and empower grassroots-level workers about the Beti Bachao Beti Padhao initiative concluded today at the Conference Hall of the District Social Welfare Office, Budgam.

The event, organized by SANKALP Hub for Empowerment of Women, Mission Shakti Budgam, aimed to raise awareness among female police officials, PLVs (Para Legal Volunteers), supervisors, teachers, anganwadi workers (AWWs), ASHA workers, and community mobilizers from NRLM (National Rural

Livelihood Mission), about the objectives of the scheme.

The participants were also made aware of various women-centric welfare schemes designed to promote and support women's empowerment at the community level.

Expert resource persons from Kashmir University and other line departments shared their insights to enhance the knowledge and capabilities of the attendees, equipping them with practical approaches to drive change and uplift women in their respective areas. The programme concluded with a call to action for the participants to become catalysts of change by spreading awareness

and ensuring the effective implementation of women empowerment initiatives in their communities. The event, organized by SANKALP Hub for Empowerment of Women, Mission Shakti Budgam, aimed to raise awareness among female police officials, PLVs (Para Legal Volunteers), supervisors, teachers, anganwadi workers (AWWs), ASHA workers, and community mobilizers from NRLM (National Rural Livelihood Mission), about the objectives of the scheme.

The participants were also made aware of various women-centric welfare schemes designed to promote and support women's empowerment at the community level.

International Year of Cooperatives: Workshop/Awareness camp held for members of PACS

■ HT News Network

SRINAGAR, MARCH 13: As part of celebrations for 'International year of Cooperatives', a workshop/awareness camp for members of Primary Agriculture Credit Societies (PACS) was organized today at JK State Cooperative Bank Headquarters, Rajbagh.

The event organized by the Deputy Registrar Cooperative Societies, Srinagar witnessed participation from the officials of Cooperative department, besides the event also saw involvement from officers of allied departments including horticulture, fisheries, NABARD etc. During the course of the event, officers from allied departments gave a detailed account of various schemes, initiatives, subsidies and grants offered by their respective departments to members of cooperative societies. They also encour-



aged the members to come forward and get enrolled in various skill development camps to improve their economic status.

The members took note of the various schemes and also raised queries regarding registration for these schemes and other issues.

The workshop ended with a resolution to improve coordination among allied departments for effective implementation of



schemes and initiatives. The event organized by the Deputy Registrar Cooperative Societies, Srinagar witnessed participation from the officials of Cooperative department, besides the event also saw involvement from officers of allied departments including horticulture, fisheries, NABARD etc.

During the course of the event, officers from allied departments gave a detailed account of various

schemes, initiatives, subsidies and grants offered by their respective departments to members of cooperative societies. They also encouraged the members to come forward and get enrolled in various skill development camps to improve their economic status.

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Ayush Department organises medical checkup cum awareness programme at IRP Camp Parnote

■ HT News Network

RAMBAN, MARCH 13: In line with directives of Deputy Commissioner Baseer-Ul-Haq Chaudhary, the Ayush Department organized a Medical Checkup cum Awareness Camp at the IRP Camp Parnote to conduct diabetes and hypertension screening of police personnel and impart them medical advice. The camp was inaugurated by Commandant IRP-16 Sukh Dev in the presence of medical experts and officials. Senior Medical Officer and District Yoga Coordinator Dr. Masood Iqbal led the awareness session, educating attendees on preventive healthcare and lifestyle modifications. A team of med-



ical professionals, including Dr. Showkat Ahmad Mir (District Hospital Ramban), Dr. Shazad (AHWC

Gool), Senior Pharmacist Shashi Kant Sharma, and Head Pharmacist Ajay Kumar, actively participated in the

camp. Volunteer Huzaifa Bin Masood, along with Sanjeet Singh and Parwaah Singh also contributed to the initiative. During the camp, about 250 police personnel underwent medical checkups, including blood pressure monitoring and diabetes screening. Free medicines were distributed among the attendees to promote health and wellness. The initiative aimed to raise awareness about common health issues and encourage preventive healthcare measures among police personnel. During the camp, about 250 police personnel underwent medical checkups, including blood pressure monitoring and diabetes screening. Free medicines were distributed among the attendees.

Traffic Police Office Rural Jammu issues traffic advisory for Holi festival

■ HT News Network

JAMMU, MARCH 13: Traffic Police Rural today issued traffic advisory for the Holi festival being celebrated tomorrow.

"Festival will lead to increased movement of persons/vehicles on the road. Through this medium, people are requested to take precautionary measures to prevent interruption in the flow of traffic in their respective areas" a hand out stated.

The office has advised the general public of districts (Samba, Kathua, Rajouri, and Poonch) to avoid wrong parking, rash driving and follow M.V/ rules while celebrating the Holi festival to prevent traffic jamming and congestion; Stunt driving which usually causes injuries and often proves

to be fatal should be avoided to ensure safety; Organizers of Holi events and Holi processions/DJ owners have been advised to desist from plying vulgar/Provocative songs/slogans using loud-speakers; People have been advised to desist from drunken driving during the festival to avert the apprehension of any mishap; maintaining lane discipline during religious processions have been stressed upon to minimise the inconvenience to the general public.

If any person is found violating the MV Act, causing danger to the human life, people can share the information with Traffic Police Control Room Jammu (0191-2459048, 2740550, 9419147732, 103); Traffic Police Rural Jammu: -(94984321021); Traffic Helpline Samba-Kathua: (8899041447) and Traffic Helpline Rajouri-Poonch:

Dairy, Poultry Sector flourishing in Reasi with effective implementation of Govt schemes

'Numerous production units set up under HADP, IDDS& IPDP across different blocks'

■ HT News Network

REASI, MARCH 13: The implementation of Holistic Agriculture Development Programme (HADP), Integrated Dairy Development Scheme (IDDS) and Integrated Poultry Development Programme (IPDP) has set the stage for sustained growth of Dairy and Poultry sectors in Reasi District.

Once lagging behind other districts of Jammu Division, Reasi is now progressing rapidly in livestock farming, under the leadership of Deputy Commissioner Nidhi Malik and with the efforts of Chief Animal Husbandry

Officer (CAHO) Dr. Ravi Kumar Kaith and his team. As per Dr. Kaith, Heifer Units, Automatic Milk Collection Units (AMCUs) and Free Range Poultry Units have been established across multiple blocks in the District. These units, established under HADP, IDDS and IPDP, aim to enhance livestock productivity, ensure fair returns for dairy farmers, and improve poultry farming practices.

"The Dairy sector, in particular, has received a shot in arm with the sanctioning and establishment of Heifer Units under HADP, promoting the breeding of high-yield milch animals" the DAHO said adding that high-



quality milch cows and buffaloes have also been imported under the Inte-

grated Dairy Development Scheme (IDDS) from outside the Union Terri-

tory to improve milk production.

To streamline milk collection and quality maintenance, Automatic Milk Collection Units (AMCUs) have been set up in different blocks of the district. These units provide dairy farmers with fair and transparent pricing while ensuring high standards in milk production and supply.

In addition to dairy farming, Dr Kaith said the Department has also focused on boosting the poultry industry. "Under the Integrated Poultry Development Programme (IPDP), big broiler farms, with capacities ranging from 1,000 to 5,000 birds, have been established. Furthermore,

20 Free Range Units under HADP have been set up to promote local egg production and encourage backyard poultry farming," he informed.

Dr. Kaith said the teams are actively interacting with livestock farmers, guiding them on the benefits of various state and central government schemes.

Through supervision of Deputy Commissioner and efforts of the Animal Husbandry Department, the District Reasi is now emerging as a model for dairy and poultry farming in Jammu Division, ensuring increased incomes and better livelihoods for livestock farmers.

Div Com, IGP review arrangements for Holi, Eid and Navratra festivals in Jammu Division

■ HT News Network

JAMMU, MARCH 13: Divisional Commissioner Jammu Ramesh Kumar, alongside Inspector General of Police (IGP) Bhim Sen Tuti, today chaired a high level meeting to review the arrangements of district administration for upcoming festival season, including Holi, Eid and Navratras.

The meeting, attended by DIGs, Deputy Commissioners and SSPs, held detailed discussion on district wise preparations for smooth celebrations of the festivals.

The Div Com sought the details from the District Administrations regarding arrangements related to supply of and stock position of essential commodities, besides status of power, water supply and sanitation around religious places and major junctions in the districts.

Directions were issued to designate nodal officers and magistrates to facilitate the smooth celebrations by ensuring clear roads for processions and religious gath-



ering while devising meticulous timing and proper planning.

IGP Jammu directed the SSP to keep a strict check on traffic violation and ensure

adherence to road safety rules, especially by youngsters riding two wheelers.

The stakeholder departments were asked to make available all necessary

arrangements and take precautions to make the celebrations convenient and smooth.

Earlier, the Deputy Commissioners and SSPs apprised the meeting on the advance arrangements made regarding route finalisations, market regulations including check on overpricing, profiteering and black-marketing, besides awareness drives for obeying traffic rules in their respective districts.

IGP Jammu directed the police officials to remain present on ground during the festivals. Directions were also issued for adequate deployment of security forces to maintain law and order across the division. Earlier, the Deputy Commissioners and SSPs apprised the meeting on the advance arrangements made regarding route finalisations, market regulations including check on overpricing, profiteering and black-marketing, besides awareness drives for obeying traffic rules in their respective districts.

NCD screening camp organised at CHC Ghagwal

■ HT News Network



SAMBA, MARCH 13: A Mega Non-Communicable Disease (NCD) screening Camp was organized today here at Community Health Centre Ghagwal as part of the ongoing NCD campaign. The camp was inaugurated by Additional District Development Commissioner (ADDC) Champa Thakur, in the presence of Chief Medical Officer Dr. Vidhi Bhutial, Block Medical Officer Dr. Richa Arora and other staff. Over 200 individuals were screened by a team of doctors, detecting 12 cases of hypertension and 8 cases of diabetes. Mid-Level Health Providers (MLHPs) from the Gagwal zones actively participated in screening the populations of their AAM centers and conducted awareness sessions on non-communicable diseases, emphasizing early detection and the importance of timely treatment. The camp aimed to enhance public awareness about NCDs and ensure early diagnosis and intervention, contributing to better community health outcomes.

NABARD signs MoU with J&K Grameen Bank to finance JLGs

■ HT News Network

JAMMU, MARCH 13: A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on the promotion and financing of 2000 Joint Liability Groups (JLGs) was today signed and exchanged between NABARD, J&K Regional Office, Jammu, and J&K Grameen Bank.

Deputy General Manager, NABARD Des Raj and Chairman, J&K Grameen Bank Sanjay Gupta signed the MoU on behalf of NABARD and J&K Grameen Bank, respectively.

The MoU signing ceremony was presided over by Chief General Manager NABARD Bhallamudi Sridhar who emphasized that the primary objective of the MoU is to enhance the flow of credit to tenant



farmers, oral lessees, sharecroppers, landless farmers, and others who may not have formal title to their land holdings. The initiative also aims to meet the credit requirements of the economically weaker sections of society by forming and credit-linking JLGs.

Bhallamudi Sridhar applauded J&K Grameen Bank for successfully financing more than 2500

JLGs under previous MoUs and encouraged the Bank to continue its efforts in financial inclusion. He further stressed the need to focus on financing individual JLG members to strengthen their economic activities. Additionally, he emphasized that the renewal of JLG loans should be completed in a timely manner to ensure the smooth flow of credit oper-

ations. Sanjay Gupta, Chairman, J&K Grameen Bank, appreciated NABARD's initiatives for promoting financial inclusion in the Union Territory and expressed gratitude for its continuous support to the Bank. He reaffirmed the Bank's commitment to playing a significant role in socio-economic development and ensuring that initiatives like social security schemes, SHG and JLG credit linkages reach even the remotest areas.

Under this MoU, J&K Grameen Bank will form and finance 2000 JLGs across UT of J&K and UT of Ladakh. NABARD will provide a promotional grant support of 4000 per JLG to J&K Grameen Bank, further strengthening financial empowerment in the region.

DC Kishtwar reviews arrangements for Holi celebration

■ HT News Network

KISHTWAR, MARCH 13: Deputy Commissioner Rajesh Kumar Shavan today convened a meeting to review the arrangements for the Holi Festival celebrations. The primary focus of the meeting was to ensure the seamless management of essential services, security, and public convenience during the festival. The DC emphasized the regulation of prices and directed the concerned officers to monitor the rates of items related to Holi celebrations, particularly Holi colors, while also ensuring strict vigilance on the sale of banned synthetic colors. To maintain hygiene and sanitation, the Executive Officer of



the Municipal Council was instructed to ensure cleanliness in the town, especially around religious places. Additionally, the authorities were asked to prioritize the repair of non-functioning lights and completion of ongoing work to ensure well-lit areas throughout the town.

The Chief Medical Officer (CMO) Kishtwar was tasked with keeping medical support readily available in case of any

emergencies during the festivities. The DC also reviewed utility services and instructed the Power Development Department (PDD) to ensure an uninterrupted power supply during the celebration. The Executive Engineer of the Public Health Engineering (PHE) department was directed to ensure adequate water supply and proper chlorination of water tanks to avoid any health-related concerns.

For security and safety, the Additional Superintendent of Police (SP) was directed to address potential security concerns. Additionally, the traffic authorities were instructed to implement effective traffic management during the event.

Religious representatives also raised their concerns, and the DC assured them of the administration's full support in addressing the issues projected by them. The meeting was attended by ADC Pawan Kotwal, ASP (Ops.) Kishtwar N. A. Khoja, ACR Idrees Lone, EO Municipality/Dy. Registrar Mirza Mumtaz Iqbal, Tehsildar Nirbhay Sharma, CMO, AC Legal Metrology, along with representatives from traffic.

Vivek Bali Extends Heartfelt Holi Greetings, Encourages Celebration with Unity and Joy

■ HT News Network

Jammu, 13 March: On the vibrant occasion of Holi, Vivek Bali, a prominent political leader, extended his heartfelt greetings to everyone, encouraging them to celebrate the festival with enthusiasm, love, and togetherness.

"This Holi, let's celebrate with colors alongside our dear ones. Bright colors, big dreams, and endless joy—Holi fills life with new energy!" Bali expressed, emphasizing the festival's significance in bringing people closer and spreading happiness. He highlighted the importance of good health, stating, "Just as colors bring life to celebrations, good health brings true happiness to life. May this festival refresh your spirit, re-energize your dreams, and fill your days with positivity." Urging people to celebrate responsibly, Bali called for spreading love, unity, and harmony during this beautiful festival. He reminded everyone that Holi is not just about colors but also about cherishing relationships and fostering goodwill in society.

With his warm message, Vivek Bali inspired people to embrace the spirit of Holi with joy and togetherness, making it a memorable and meaningful celebration.



Dr. Parvinder Singh takes over as Director Animal Husbandry Jammu

■ HT News Network

JAMMU, MARCH 13: Dr. Parvinder Singh today assumed office as Director Animal Husbandry Jammu here at Directorate of Animal Husbandry Talab Tillo, amid a warm welcome from officers and staff of the Directorate.

Dr. Parvinder has vast experience in the animal husbandry sector as he has held several prominent positions in the department including Joint Director and Deputy Director among others. Currently he is also serving as Director Animal Husbandry Kashmir and CEO, Livestock Development Board Kashmir.

Later, Dr. Parvinder interacted with senior officials of the Department and asked them to work with utmost dedication and ensure that benefits of various government schemes reach intended beneficiaries in a time bound manner. The staff present assured their whole-hearted support and cooperation.

Training for Haj Pilgrims on March 19 at Ramban

■ HT News Network

RAMBAN, MARCH 13: As per the schedule devised by the J&K Haj Committee Srinagar, the District Administration Ramban has announced the dates and venue for the compulsory Haj orientation cum training programme for the pilgrims of the district.

All selected pilgrims of Ramban district will be imparted training programme, covering Manasik-e-Hajj and other essential logistics at Jamia Masjid Qadeem Ramban on March 19, 2025.

The programme aims to impart crucial guidance on preparations, ensuring that all the pilgrims are well-equipped with the necessary knowledge and procedures for the holy Haj journey. The District Administration has urged all selected pilgrims to attend the session as per the scheduled date.

44BN CRPF organizes volleyball tournament

■ HT News Network



Srinagar :The 44 Battalion CRPF deployed in hypersensitive parts of District Srinagar and Budgam has been very instrumental in various human development programmes in recent past. Continuing its glorious role in promoting youths for various development activities, this time, unit endeavored in sports activities and accordingly organized a volleyball tournament under its civic action programme with effect from 08/03/2025 to 11/03/2025. Final match was played between H.M.T. Warriors and Palpora Volley Ball club and both teams displayed lot of professionalism and competition in true spirit. In a nail biting match, HMT warriors became victorious. Shri Rishi Raj Sahay, Commandant, 44 Bn presided over the closing ceremony and in presence of Shri Kamlesh Kumar, Second in Command, Shri Shailesh Kumar Pandey, Second in command and various other officers from CRPF and civil departments presented trophies, medal, volleyball kits and cash prizes to both the teams. The chief guest Shri Rishi Raj Sahay, Commandant while deliberating stressed upon the importance of sports in discipline life and progressive future. He stressed that fit youth means fit India and that sports not only develop the feel of competitiveness but also is the greatest stress buster in day to day life. He congratulated all the teams for participating in this tournament very sportingly. Even the efforts of 44 Bn was widely appreciating by all the participants and they desired that such type of events should be organized very frequently. Overall the local mass particularly the youths applauded the efforts and good works of CRPF in not only their role in security but also in nation building.

7 day Training on Scientific Beekeeping concludes with felicitation of trainees

■ HT News Network

JAMMU, MARCH 13: The seven-day training program on Scientific Beekeeping, organized by the Apiculture Development Scheme, Agriculture Production and Farmers Welfare Department Jammu, under the National Beekeeping and Honey Mission (NBHM) concluded today with

an impressive felicitation functioned held in the Conference Hall, Directorate of Agriculture, Krishi Bhawan. The event was attended by 50 beekeepers, farmers, and young entrepreneurs from Doda, Kishtwar, Jammu, Udhampur, Rajouri, Reasi, and Poonch districts of the Jammu Division.

The training conducted from March 7 to March 13, 2025 aimed at raising

awareness and enhancing the skills of prospective beekeepers. Participants were trained in bee hive operations, colony management, and received hands-on experience and practical insights at the DCTC, Apiculture Development Scheme Jammu.

The ceremony was presided over by Director Agriculture Jammu, Arvinder Singh Reen, who felicitated the participants. Beekeepers were

presented with tool kits, bee flora saplings, and certificates of participation, in recognition of their dedication to advancing scientific beekeeping practices. In his address, the Director assured the beekeepers that the department would extend support in the marketing and branding of honey products. He encouraged the beekeepers to work together in clusters or form Farmer Producer Orga-

nizations (FPOs) to strengthen the marketing and sales of honey. Additionally, he committed the department's technical and financial assistance to support the migration of bee colonies and optimize honey production. He emphasized the economic potential of hive products, such as royal jelly, bee venom, propolis, and pollen, which could provide valuable alternative sources of income for

beekeepers. The Director also highlighted the immense potential for beekeeping in Jammu & Kashmir due to the region's diverse agro-climatic conditions, rich biodiversity, and the growing demand for honey, which is valued for its medicinal and nutritional benefits. He encouraged the unemployed youth to consider beekeeping as a profession and take advantage of the growing industry.



Tejas LCA MK1 test-fires beyond visual range air-to-air Astra missile

AGENCIES

NEW DELHI, MAR 12

Aeronautical Development Agency (ADA) on Wednesday successfully test fired homegrown Astra, Beyond Visual Range Air-to-Air Missile (BVRAAM) from LCA AF MK1 prototype fighter aircraft.

The test fire was carried out off the coast of Chandipur in Odisha, a Defence Ministry statement said.

The test firing successfully demonstrated the direct hit of the missile on flying target. All the subsystems performed accurately meeting all mission parameters and objectives.



Astra missile is designed and developed by DRDO capable of engaging the targets over 100km and equipped with advanced guidance and navigation capabilities allows missile to destroy targets with greater accuracy.

The missile is already inducted into the Indian Air Force (IAF).

The successful test-firing is a significant milestone towards the induction of LCA AF MK1A variant. The success is the result of hard work by the inte-

grated team of scientists, engineers and technicians from ADA, DRDO, Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) along with support from CEMILAC, DG-AQA, IAF and test range team. Further trials are planned towards the performance evaluation.

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh has congratulated the teams of DRDO, IAF, ADA, HAL and all involved in the trial.

Secretary, Department of Defence R&D and Chairman DRDO Samir V Kamat appreciated the efforts of scientists, engineers and technicians from various organisations and industry.

Shah virtually inaugurates, lays foundation stone for Infra projects worth Rs 146 cr in Ahmedabad

AGENCIES

NEW DELHI, MAR 13

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Thursday virtually inaugurated and laid the foundation stone for several infrastructure projects worth Rs 146 crore in Ahmedabad, Gujarat.

In his address, Shah said that these infrastructure projects will enhance the convenience of local residents, improve connectivity, and provide a fresh boost to employment, industry, and business, a Home Ministry statement said here.

The projects include construction of a railway overbridge, approximately 1 km long, on the Ahmedabad-Viramgam railway track at Sanand-Chekhlā-Kadi Road, with an investment of Rs 60 crore. Moreover, foundation stone has been laid for the construction of a 4-lane bridge over the Narmada



Canal on National Highway No 147 at a cost of Rs 36.30 crore, and a flyover bridge on Sarkhej-Gandhinagar (SG) Highway at Chharodi at a cost of Rs 45 crore.

The Minister stated that all these development works will set new milestones of development in the four assembly constituencies of the Gandhinagar Lok Sabha constituency.

Shah said that the Gujarat government has completed several development projects worth thousands of crores in the Gandhinagar Lok Sabha

constituency. In terms of infrastructure, Gujarat is currently in the first position across India.

The Home Minister informed that the centre is going to build a state-of-the-art 500-bed hospital in Sanand. He mentioned that the centre has decided that this hospital will remain open 24 hours a day for all the people of Sanand and Bavlā talukas.

He also said that several trust-run hospitals are being built in this area. Additionally, the centre is constructing a 300-bed

government hospital in Kalol Taluka. Shah said that once all these hospitals are completed, every person will be able to access state-of-the-art healthcare facilities near their home.

The Home Minister said that under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Gujarat, along with the entire country, is making a significant progress and mentioned that the state is home to the world's largest green energy park planned in Kutch, Asia's largest green city, Dholera, and India's second-longest highway, the Surat-Chennai Expressway.

Shah further said that to create an international financial hub, GIFT City has been established in Ahmedabad, the Ahmedabad-Mumbai Bullet Train has been launched, and a Rapid Rail service has been started between Bhuj and Ahmedabad.

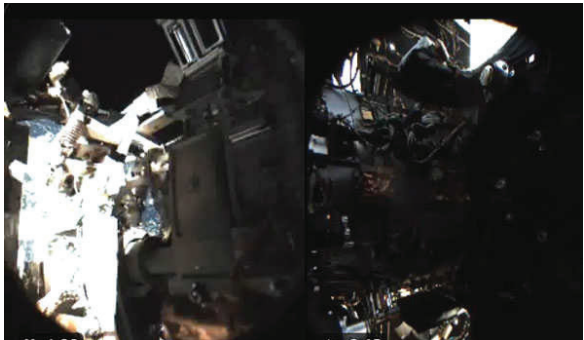
ISRO successfully undocks Spadex modules

AGENCIES

BENGALURU, MAR 13

In yet another giant step for India's space ambitions, the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) has successfully completed the undocking of its Space Docking Experiment (Spadex) modules.

This marks a major achievement in India's space technology, bringing the country closer to advanced space missions, including future space stations. ISRO's Spadex mission, launched on December 30, 2024, aboard PSLV-C60, was designed to test the ability of two spacecraft to dock with each other in orbit—something only a handful of countries have achieved. The two satellites, SDX-1 and SDX-2, suc-



cessfully docked on January 16, 2025, making India the fourth nation in the world to demonstrate this complex space maneuver after the USA, Russia, and China.

After weeks in a docked state, ISRO scientists successfully carried out a carefully planned undocking process. The sequence involved extending SDX-2 to create separation,

releasing Capture Lever 3 as scheduled, disengaging the Capture Lever in SDX-2, and issuing the final decapture command in both SDX-1 and SDX-2, ensuring a smooth and controlled separation.

With all these steps successfully completed, Spadex undocked! ISRO shared the news on social media, calling it a "spectacular success" and con-

gratulating its team. Stunning visuals of the undocking were captured by both spacecraft, giving the world a glimpse of this milestone achievement.

The Spadex mission marks a significant leap for India's space programme, enabling ISRO to develop key technologies for future advancements. It paves the way for the development of Indian space stations, facilitates in-orbit satellite repairs, and supports the possibility of human space missions, strengthening India's position in global space exploration.

With this success, India has once again proven its growing capabilities in advanced space operations, paving the way for bigger and bolder missions in the years ahead.

PM Modi 'orchestrated' Airtel, Jio's deal with Starlink, alleges Congress

AGENCIES

NEW DELHI, MAR 13

The Congress on Thursday accused Prime Minister Narendra Modi of allegedly "orchestrating" India's two leading telecom firms "Bharti Airtel and Reliance Jio's partnerships with Starlink" saying that it is a bid to "buy goodwill with President Trump through Elon Musk".

On his social media handle X, senior Congress leader Jairam Ramesh said, "Within literally 12 hours both Airtel and Jio have announced partnerships with Starlink, seemingly overcoming all their objections to its entry into India - which they have



been voicing for quite some time".

It may be mentioned that Elon Musk promoted Starlink, these officials deliberately misrepresented facts and manipulated documentation to suppress evidence of corruption within MUDA.

The whistleblower, on Thursday, also accused powerful political figures, including Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, of shielding those involved. Allegations suggest that political interference has obstructed a fair inquiry, raising questions about the credibility of anti-corruption mechanisms in

the state.

Krishna called for a thorough investigation into the competence and ethical integrity of the accused officers, questioning their suitability for serving in the Indian Police Service (IPS). The allegations have sparked concerns about systemic corruption in Mysuru's governance and underscored the need for a transparent and independent probe.

Dr Yathindra Siddaramaiah, a Congress leader, assured that the state government would take legal action to recover MUDA plots allegedly acquired through corrupt means.

Mr. Elon Musk," Jairam said.

He asked, "But many questions remain. Perhaps the most important one relates to national security. Who will have the power to switch connectivity on or off when national security demands it? Will it be Starlink or its Indian partners? Will other satellite-based connectivity providers also be permitted and on what basis?"

Ramesh said, "And, of course, the much larger question of Tesla manufacturing in India remains. Is there some commitment to it now that Starlink's entry into India has been facilitated?"

Lt Rangaswamy begins centennial year with tribute to fellow soldiers at NWM

AGENCIES

NEW DELHI, MAR 13

Lieutenant Rangaswamy Madhawan Pillai, a 99-year-old veteran of the Indian National Army (INA), marked the beginning of his centennial year with a heartfelt tribute to his fellow soldiers and leader.

The Azad Hind Fauz veteran, on Thursday, paid tribute by laying a wreath at the National War Memorial and the statue of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose at Kartavya Path.

Organised by the Indian Army, the event was attended by senior armed forces personnel and the public. The ceremony stood as a powerful reminder of India's enduring legacy of sacrifice and patriotism, an Indian Army statement said.

Lieutenant Rangaswamy Madhawan Pillai was



born on March 13, 1926, in the Swryan Township of Rangoon District in Burma (now Myanmar). His father hailed from Sivagangai District in Tamil Nadu. He initially joined the Indian Independence League as a civilian in 1942 under Rash Behari Bose.

When Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose arrived in Singapore, Lt Madhawan formally enlisted in the INA on November 1, 1943, at the age of 18. After receiving his commission from the Officers Train-

ing School in Burma, he served as a recruitment and fundraising officer. Later, he served in the administrative branch at the INA Headquarters in Rangoon under Major General KP Thimayya (elder brother of General KS Thimayya).

He was officially recognised as a freedom fighter by the Government of India on 1 August, 1980. On 23 January 2024, Prime Minister Narendra Modi felicitated him on the occasion of Parakram

Diwas celebrations at Red Fort in the National Capital. Lieutenant Madhawan's life story embodies the courage and unity that defined the Indian National Army. Decades ago, he braved the unforgiving terrain of the Northeast, carrying the aspirations of millions who longed for a free India. Now, at the threshold of his centenary, his act of remembrance stands as a powerful testament to the unwavering resolve that fuelled India's struggle for independence.

Today's wreath-laying ceremony not only honours the sacrifices of the brave men and women who fought for India's freedom but also serves as a poignant reminder of the nation's ongoing journey to break free from colonial legacies while upholding the spirit of their sacrifice.

Nitish instructs to complete the construction of Airports at an accelerated pace

AGENCIES

PATNA, MAR 13

Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar directed the authorities concerned to complete the construction of terminals of Jai Prakash Narayan International Airport.

Reviewing the progress of the construction work at Jaiprakash Narayan International Airport and inspecting the spot of the proposed International Airport in Bihta here on Thursday, Kumar asked the authorities to complete the construction work of terminals of Jai Prakash Narayan International Airport at the earliest for convenience of the travellers.

He said the airport was being expanded in view of the increasing number of travellers and better facilities were being established for them.

Kumar said that the travellers can avail the facilities with an increase in the number of flights from



here.

During inspection the authorities apprised the chief minister that 11 aero stations were being constructed at this airport and all of the construction work would be finished by June.

While inspecting the spot for construction of Bihta International Airport, Kumar said that the airport will be constructed at the earliest after which international flights would operate from both of the airports. Travellers from Bihar will also get benefits

once the airport in Bihta is operational. It will minimise the traffic pressure at Jaiprakash Narayan International Airport of Patna, he added.

He said to minimise the travel time from Jai Prakash Narayan International Airport to Bihta airport an elevated road was being constructed.

During the inspection the authorities apprised the Chief Minister with the details of the proposed Bihta airport and informed that 10 aero stations would be constructed here.

UP govt sets record with 3.90 lakh MT more paddy procured

AGENCIES

LUCKNOW, MAR 13

Uttar Pradesh has set a new record in paddy procurement, surpassing last year's figure by 3.90 lakh metric tonnes, reaching 57.70 lakh metric tons in 2024-25, official sources said here on Thursday.

Sources said that ensuring prompt payments, the Yogi government has already disbursed over 99 percent of dues to farmers, amounting to more than Rs 13,326 crore. It may be noted that this year the Minimum Support Price (MSP) was fixed at Rs 2,300 per quintal for regular paddy and Rs 2,320 per quintal for Grade A paddy, Rs 117 higher than er quintal than last year. Farmers also received Rs 20 per quintal for unloading, sieving and cleaning.

MUDA scam reaches CVC, whistleblower accuses top officials

AGENCIES

BENGALURU, MAR 13

The Mysore Urban Development Authority (MUDA) corruption probe has escalated as whistleblower Snehamayi Krishna has accused senior officials of fabricating a false report despite substantial evidence. The case has now reached the Commissioner of the Central Vigilance Committee (CVC), intensifying scrutiny on the integrity of key law enforcement officers.

Krishna has formally lodged a complaint against Additional Director General of Police Manish Kharbikar,

Inspector General of Police Subrahmanyaeshwar Rao, and Mysore Lokayukta Superintendent of Police TJ Udayesh. According to Krishna, these officials deliberately misrepresented facts and manipulated documentation to suppress evidence of corruption within MUDA.

The whistleblower, on Thursday, also accused powerful political figures, including Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, of shielding those involved. Allegations suggest that political interference has obstructed a fair inquiry, raising questions about the credibility of anti-corruption mechanisms in

the state.

Krishna called for a thorough investigation into the competence and ethical integrity of the accused officers, questioning their suitability for serving in the Indian Police Service (IPS). The allegations have sparked concerns about systemic corruption in Mysuru's governance and underscored the need for a transparent and independent probe.

Dr Yathindra Siddaramaiah, a Congress leader, assured that the state government would take legal action to recover MUDA plots allegedly acquired through corrupt means.

However, Krishna has criticised this move, asserting that plot recovery should follow due legal process rather than political directives. The whistleblower has urged CM Siddaramaiah to prioritise legal compliance and seek professional legal counsel on the matter.

With the controversy gaining traction, the case has reignited discussions on Karnataka's governance and the effectiveness of its anti-corruption framework. Observers emphasise the need for an independent and impartial probe to restore public trust and ensure accountability.

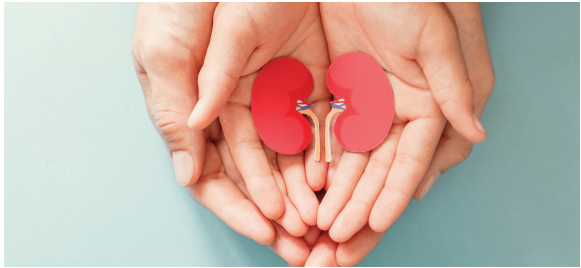
WORLD KIDNEY DAY LIVING A HEALTHY KIDNEY



DR. TASADUK HUSSAIN ITOO
FELLOW, INTERNATIONAL
DIABETES
FEDERATION (BELGIUM)

World Kidney Day is celebrated every year on 2nd Thursday of March, and adopting a healthy lifestyle is key to prevention of kidney diseases, including diabetes, hypertension, heart diseases and stroke.

While having kidney disease increases the chances of also having heart disease and stroke -- early detection and treatment of kidney disease is important.



Adopting unhealthy routines like eating poorly, exercising less, deprived sleep or leaning more heavily on substances such as alcohol, smoking and drug abuse including taking stress -- could increase the risk of developing kidney diseases.

Having said that there are many modifiable risk factors responsible for development of kidney diseases that could be modified well in healthy ways to prevent the latter from occurring.

Maintaining a healthy weight, eating a healthy diet, exercising regularly, taking less salt in diet, getting adequate sleep

and monitoring your cholesterol and triglyceride levels and keeping them under control are crucial in prevention of kidney diseases in general and heart diseases in particular.

Moreover, among people with diabetes and high blood pressure -- tight blood sugar and blood pressure control have been shown to lower the risk of developing kidney disease.

While high blood pressure has been attributed as a highly potential risk factor for developing kidney diseases -- adopting DASH (Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension)

diet plan, besides using blood pressure lowering medications -- could help people lower their blood pressure.

In addition, controlling your lifestyle choices such as avoiding smoking and alcohol consumption are too important to help in prevention of kidney diseases.

People should adopt healthy hygienic practices to prevent infections and also avoid taking over-the-counter medications like painkillers and many herbal supplements (without a doctor's advice) -- that are risk factors for kidney diseases. More to say, people should also avoid unnecessary stress in their lives by following a good health routine as research has shown that the depression including stress could increase a person's risk for developing hypertension -- that is in turn a potential risk factor for kidney diseases.

Health benefits of Papaya



SAHIL MANZOOR
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Our body needs different food items that must be packed with all the essential and important components. We cannot eat the same food regularly, as it can make us ill and spoil our stomachs. As we know, the cell is the fundamental unit of life. A living cell can be defined as the fundamental, structural, and functional unit of life. There are 36 trillion living cells present in an adult human. Food items are necessary for our survival, and all of them keep us fit and healthy for our day-to-day tasks. Our body consists of various important organs, both internal and external, like skin, eyes, hair, teeth, stomach, etc. One thing that is very interesting is that we need different components of food for our overall development. The components are different types of vitamins,

minerals, carbohydrates, fats, etc. All the mentioned food items are not present in a single food item as different food items are known for different basic components, like carrot, which is well known for vitamin A as it is good for eye health; collard greens, which are rich in fiber and are good for bowel movement; fish, which is rich in omega-3 fatty acids and is good for heart health; pulses, which are rich in proteins and are good for our overall health; water, which keeps us hydrated and keeps our bowel movement in a very good position;.

Today, in this article, I am going to share with you the health benefits of papaya. These days, papaya is trending in every household in Kashmir after the watermelon controversy. As we know, all food items are laced with important and essential components of food and are important for our body. The same papaya is one of them. In India, papaya is cultivated in Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal, Madhya Pradesh, and Gujarat. After the melon controversy in Kashmir, papaya is gaining more fame among customers. The market for papaya is good enough

these days. This very tasty fruit, packed in small poly pockets and sold to customers during the winter, is common in Kashmir.

Health benefits of papaya.

This fruit is referred to as the fruit of angels as it has immense and great health benefits when eaten on an empty stomach. 1). It is good for skin health, as it is packed with antioxidants like vitamin A and vitamin C. Papaya encourages the synthesis of collagen, makes the skin radiant, and minimizes wrinkles. 2) Provides energy: papaya is a good option for a morning lick-me-up because of its natural sugars, vitamins, and minerals, which deliver a rapid and long-lasting energy boost. 3) Boost immunity: papaya boosts our immunity as it is packed with vitamin C and keeps us away from lethal infection. 4) It helps with weight loss: as it contains fiber and is low in calories, papaya helps you feel full for a longer period of time, which can help with weight loss. 5) Keeps you happy and sharpens your brain: foliate, a B-vitamin necessary for brain function and mood control, is found in papayas. Eating it in the morning has been shown to improve

mood and cognitive performance. 6) Good for eye health and vision: with beta-carotenes and vitamin A, papaya lowers the risk of muscular degradation, prevents age-related eye disorders, and promotes good eyesight. 7) Good for digestion: the papain enzyme, which aids in the breakdown of proteins and encourages effective digestion, can help you start your day with better digestion. 8) Reduces inflammation: papayas contain anti-inflammatory qualities that aid in the body's reduction of inflammation, which lessens the pain and suffering brought on by illnesses like arthritis. 9) Good for heart health: contains potassium and fiber, which lower blood pressure and cholesterol and lower the risk of heart attacks and strokes. 10) alleviates the constipation: Papayas are rich in fiber, which encourages regular bowel movements that ease constipation and support a healthy digestive tract.

Not only papaya Eat all the seasonal and fresh fruits and vegetables regularly. Avoid junk food and drink plenty of water. Exercise regularly, and keep your health status good and up-to-date.

One in two Indians taking AI's help to set up sleep routines: Report

AGENCIES
BENGALURU

With sleep-related disorders increasing in India, one in two or about 52 per cent of people are taking the help of Artificial Intelligence (AI)-based voice assistants to set up sleep routines, a new report said on Tuesday.

The study, by YouGov and Amazon Alexa, which comes ahead of World Sleep Day on March 14, showcases sleep routine habits of 1,000 respondents across 10 cities in the country. It showed that one in two respondents use voice assistants to set up their sleep routines -- with more people between 35-45 years using voice assistants compared to those aged between 25-34 years.

Notably, 53 per cent of people experienced sleep-related issues when not following a consistent bedtime routine. But, following a regular sleep pattern led to a noticeable improvement in about 54 per cent of adults, the study said.



lowing a regular sleep pattern led to a noticeable improvement in about 54 per cent of adults, the study said.

"Sleep routines are gaining popularity, and what's noteworthy is that smart technologies, especially voice assistants like Alexa, are increasingly becoming a valuable aid in helping people follow their bedtime routines. Personalised voice AI experiences are emerging as practical alternatives to handheld screen devices before bedtime," said Teena Sidana, Country Manager, Alexa India.

"Whether it's playing meditation sessions or

relaxing sounds, listening to audiobooks or music, setting reminders and alarms, or controlling smart devices to adjust the room's sleep environment, people are finding innovative ways to use Alexa as part of their bedtime routines. Alexa users can easily set up their bedtime routine through the Alexa app, customising it to their specific needs and preferences," Sidana added.

The study further showed that households with couples and kids are also using voice assistants to set up sleep routines. About 45 per cent of people take the help of

voice assistants in smart devices for listening to music, podcasts, meditation playlists, ambient sounds, movies, and audiobooks.

While 23 per cent use voice assistants to set up reminders and alarms, 22 per cent use them for controlling smart home appliances such as smart lights in the bedroom or baby room, automated curtains, smart ACs, etc.

The study also revealed that more than 50 per cent of the respondents have expressed interest in including wellness activities in the future as part of their bedtime routine.

These include activities like meditation, journaling, light exercises like walks, and following a skincare routine. Couples with and without kids have shown higher interest (32 per cent) in adding meditation and journaling as part of their routine.

Govt treats 42.01 mn for hypertension, 25.27 mn for diabetes under '75 by 25' initiative

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI

Under the ambitious '75 by 25' initiative, India has treated 42.01 million people for hypertension or high blood pressure and 25.27 million for diabetes, said Union Minister of State for Health and Family Welfare Prataprao Jadhav in the Parliament.

The Government had in May 2023 unveiled the "75/25" initiative which aims to provide standardised care to 75 million people living with hypertension and diabetes in the country by December 2025.

In a written reply in the Rajya Sabha, Jadhav informed that the coun-



try "has achieved 89.7 per cent of the target" of treating the burden of non-communicable diseases (NCDs).

In view of the rising NCDs, the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare launched an NCD screening campaign on February

20. The nationwide campaign, valid till March 31, aims to achieve 100 per cent screening of people aged 30 years and above. It is being conducted across A y u s h m a n Arogya Mandir facilities and other healthcare institutions under the NP-NCD framework.

Further, to address the rising prevalence of NCDs like hypertension, diabetes, oral cancer, breast cancer, and cervical cancer, the Ministry had in 2010 initiated the

National Programme for Prevention and Control of Non-Communicable Diseases (NP-NCD).

The programme employs a multifaceted strategy that includes early detection and screening of individuals aged 30 years and above, implementing screening at all levels of healthcare delivery, and providing assistance for accurate diagnosis and cost-effective treatment options.

It also provides teleconsultation services, monitors national NCDs via a dedicated portal, and coordinates inter-ministerial efforts to promote NCD awareness and encourage healthy lifestyle choices.

Surrogate ads: Despite govt concerns, Pernod Ricard India unveils Ballantine's Soda campaign

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI

Despite the government's stern warning against surrogate advertisements promoting alcohol, tobacco and related products, liquor company Pernod Ricard India's latest campaign is promoting Ballantine's Soda 'Celebrating Corporate Tribe in India'.

Ballantine's is a brand of blended Scotch whisky produced by the Chivas Brothers subsidiary of Pernod Ricard in Dumbarton, Scotland.

The new advertisement campaign, created by ad agency Ogilvy, lures corporate individuals by celebrating their aspirations.

The Ballantine's Soda campaign "Stay True and excellence will always be your side", supports the new corporate class -- made of creators, innovators, and path breakers.



According to Kartik Mohindra, Chief Marketing Officer at Pernod Ricard India, "Ballantine's has always embraced an unconventional approach, championing those who dare to Stay True to themselves".

Earlier this month, the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW) asked officials at the Indian Premier League (IPL) to ban all forms of tobacco and alcohol advertisements -- direct and surrogate -- during the upcoming cricket season, slated to begin on March 22.

The ban extends both to stadium premises as well

as a live telecast on television.

In a letter to IPL officials, the Ministry stated that "cricket players are role models for the youngsters" and that promoting tobacco or alcohol products by them can have a poor impact on youngsters' minds.

In February 2024, the Department of Consumer Affairs, under the Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution said strict action would be taken against surrogate ads.

"Any continued involvement in surrogate advertising will not be con-

doned," said the then Secretary of the Department of Consumer Affairs, Rohit Kumar Singh.

"It was underscored that stringent measures will be implemented to address any instances of non-compliance, with the firm commitment to take decisive actions against those found in violation," he added.

According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), alcohol is a Class I carcinogen -- a substance capable of causing cancer. It is also a key risk factor for other non-communicable diseases (NCDs) like cardiovascular diseases, chronic lung disease, diabetes, hypertension, etc -- which account for more than 70 per cent of deaths annually in India.

Even as India is seeing a significant surge in these NCDs, ads like these pose a potential danger to public

India ranked 11th in global pharma exports in 2023: Centre

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI

With the government taking several measures to ensure the quality, safety and efficacy of medicines, the Indian pharmaceutical exports ranked 11th globally in value terms in the year 2023, Anupriya Patel, Union Minister of State for Chemicals and Fertilisers, said in the Rajya Sabha on Tuesday.

Citing a research analysis published by Bain and Company in the year 2025, Patel said that the total pharmaceutical exports accounted for 3 per cent.

"The Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO) and the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare have taken several measures to ensure the quality, safety, and efficacy of medicines," Patel said, in a written reply.

This includes risk-based inspections of drug manufacturing and testing firms in December 2022 by the CDSCO, in collaboration



with State regulators.

About "905 units have been inspected, resulting in 694 actions being taken," the minister added.

Meanwhile, the MoS also stated that the National Pharmaceuticals Pricing Policy (NPPP), 2012 has laid down principles for

the regulation of prices of drugs.

"The key principles of regulation of prices under the said policy are -- regulation on the basis of essentiality of drugs, regulation of prices of formulations only, that is, medicines used by consumers and not the upstream prod-

ucts such as bulk drugs or intermediates, and regulation through market-based pricing and not cost-based pricing," Patel said.

Under the policy, the National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority (NPPA), under the Department of Pharmaceuticals (DoP), fixes ceiling prices under the provisions of the Drugs (Prices Control) Order (DPCO), 2013.

For consumer benefit and transparency, the Ministry has also launched NPPA's mobile app, Pharma Sahi Daam (PSD). It is available for download from the Google Playstore for Android-based devices and from App Store for Apple devices.

Consumers can easily access the brand name, composition, ceiling price, and maximum retail price of drugs from PSD.

Further, all price notifications of formulations for which prices have been fixed or revised are available on NPPA's website, Patel said.



Only a matter of time before they win one: Ponting on New Zealand's Champions Trophy campaign

AGENCIES

SYDNEY, MAR 13 (UNI)

Ricky Ponting believes that despite missing out on the title, New Zealand can be proud of their runner-up finish at the Champions Trophy.

Speaking to Crystal Arnold on the latest edition of The ICC Review after the final, Ponting said, "I don't think it (New Zealand's campaign) went wrong at all. I think they had another outstanding tournament. They were brilliant right the way through."

"I was asked at the start of the tournament who I thought the final four would be, and as soon as you start talking about top fours for ICC events, you just have to put New Zealand in it, because they just always do it," he said.

"And I didn't do it this time because I thought Pakistan would make it being at home, and I thought South Africa would make it. So I didn't have New Zealand there and sure enough there they are again," Ponting said.

"And what a dominant performance it was against South Africa in their semi-final to make



it through to the final. You probably can't play a better game of one-day cricket than that. To bat first and make 360-odd, I think it's the highest total ever in a Champions Trophy game," he said.

Ponting went on to applaud the exploits of Matt Henry, who missed out on the final owing to an injury - closing the tournament as the leading wicket-taker.

"They just came up against a really good team in the final, and they weren't far away. India won in the 49th or 50th over. They haven't done a lot wrong," Ponting continued.

"And that's without some of their stars actually performing in that final. And that's without Matt Henry being fit in that final as well, who was their leading wicket-taker going into it. So they've had a great campaign," he

said.

"And if they keep putting themselves there, it's only a matter of time before they will (win an ICC tournament)," Ponting said.

Another prominent feature of the Black Caps squad was Glenn Phillips, who contributed in all three facets of the game - especially pulling off stunning catches in the field.

A prime fielder for Australia back in the day himself, Ponting was all praise for the New Zealander's fielding and believes he's in the upper echelons of the department with some of the very best.

"If you put the highlights reel together, his is now probably better than anyone. He hasn't played anywhere near as many games as Herschelle Gibbs, (AB) de Villiers, Andrew Symonds or Paul Collingwood, these guys that were always known

as being the great fielders. (Ravindra) Jadeja is another one," he said.

Ponting then delved into the technical aspects of Phillips' work.

"But his agility is something that is just unbelievable. His ability to launch himself for catches, and a lot of them are one-handers as well, so it's not just the agility, but you've still got to hang on to the ball, you've got to catch it," Ponting said.

Picking his favourite off Phillips' highlights reel at the Champions Trophy, Ponting said, "I saw a quote before saying that he thought that catch in the final (that of Shubman Gill) was his best. I don't think that was as good as the Kohli one (last group game against India), to be honest."

"I watched that catch a few times, I actually think he could have got that with two hands, and that made that probably look a bit more spectacular than it needed to be, but some of his other catches, I mean, they're unbelievably good," he said.

"I've seen it in Test cricket as well. He's taken some in Test cricket in that same area at backward point," Ponting added.

Jyoti Singh shares her senior debut experience at FIH Hockey Pro League

AGENCIES

NEW DELHI, MAR 13 (UNI)

At 20, Jyoti Singh was handed her senior India debut at the FIH Hockey Pro League 2024/25 (Women) as she featured in four of India's matches, including their remarkable win against World No. 1, the Netherlands.

"Listening to the national anthem echo in the stadium when I made my debut was truly a special feeling that I will never forget," Jyoti couldn't have summed up her debut tournament experience in a better way.

"My overall experience was very good, especially our win over the Netherlands on the last day. It felt good to help the team achieve something big surrounded by all the senior players," she added.

Talking about the events leading up to her first game, Jyoti said, "I got to know that I was debuting against Spain the night before the match. I had butterflies in my stomach



and couldn't sleep. The senior players helped me calm down the next morning at breakfast."

"Sushila Chanu (di) told me to play freely and that there was no pressure on me and that the senior players would support me. Savita di told me to not take any risks and just listen to her throughout the match. This really stuck with me and helped me in the tournament," she said.

Jyoti had just returned after the Hero Hockey India League season with Delhi SG Pipers when she got to know she had made it into the senior squad. "I didn't expect to

be selected so soon. We had started preparing for senior nationals when I got to know. I called my parents to inform them and they were very happy."

Jyoti's sporting roots are engraved in her family. Her father, Dheeraj Singh, is a former athlete and has represented India internationally. He introduced her to sports when she used to go running with him in her early years. Jyoti's connection with Hockey however, began through her cousin, Anuja Singh, who currently plays for Central Railways.

"My cousin used to play hockey. When she used to come home during

summer vacation, I used to feel like playing hockey after hearing about it from her. So in 2015, I held the stick for the first time when I went to the same academy (MP Women Hockey Academy, Gwalior) as her," she said.

Talking about her game, Jyoti said, "I need to be quicker. Playing the Hero HIL and the Pro League has made me realise that I need to be faster to keep up with the international attackers. I also need

to feed the ball better, something that Sushila di does very well. I look up to her since she is a very experienced defender. The way she works and guides other players from the back is really inspiring."

Before this, Jyoti first became the Captain of the junior squad and led her side to a gold medal at the Junior Women's Asia Cup in December, last year. Now, Jyoti has returned to junior camp and is dead set to win another medal for her country.

UEFA: Aston Villa beat Brugge with 3-0

AGENCIES

BIRMINGHAM, MAR 13 (UNI)

Aston Villa completed a comfortable passage into a Champions League quarter-final with Paris St-Germain after cruising to victory

against Club Brugge at Villa Park. Unai Emery's side were in prime position as they protected a 3-1 advantage from the first leg in Belgium, putting the tie out of the reach of the visitors following the half-time introduction of on-

loan talisman Marco Asensio, the BBC reported. A risk-free first 45 minutes was only notable for Club Brugge defender Kyriani Sabbe's 16th-minute red card for hauling back Marcus Rashford as he chased keeper

Emiliano Martinez's long clearance. Asensio, outstanding since his arrival from PSG, secured Villa's passage into the last eight five minutes after coming on with a neat finish from Leon Bailey's clever pass

India squad for AFC Beach Soccer Asian Cup 2025 announced

AGENCIES

NEW DELHI, MAR 13 (UNI)

A 12-member squad was announced on Thursday, for the India beach soccer national team, who will play the AFC Beach Soccer Asian Cup Thailand 2025 next week.

India, coached by Mohd Faizal Bin Sood from Malaysia, have been drawn into Group A of the Beach Soccer Asian Cup and will begin their campaign against hosts Thailand on March 20, following which, they will face Kuwait (March 22) and Lebanon (March 24) in Pattaya.

The 12-member squad, along with the coaching and support staff, will leave for Pattaya from Rajkot on the evening of March 16 and reach their



destination in the wee hours of March 17.

The national team camp was held in Porbandar, Gujarat, over two phases, with 75 players from 12 states being called up for the first stage, which commenced in October last year. Thereon, the camp was narrowed down to 25 players from February.

Head coach Faizal, who was formerly the gaffer

of the Malaysia national beach soccer team in 2019, is heading into the 2025 AFC Beach Soccer Asian Cup with a positive outlook.

"We have a chance to qualify for the quarter-finals. Of course, the other teams have been in beach soccer for a longer period, and with Thailand as the hosts, it will be even more challenging, but anything can happen in beach

soccer," said Faizal.

The 50-year-old stressed the importance of the ability of the Indian players to operate at a high speed.

"The good thing about Indian players is that they are all fast, so it's easy to develop a strategy, and the technical aspects become better," he said. "Speed and technique will be the foundation of our game."

The India beach soccer squad: Pratik Kankonkar (GK), Raj Chauhan (GK), Nehal Parab, Sreejith Babu, Jaypal Singh, Latish Kunkolkar, Rohith Y, Mukhtar Umarul, Musheer TKB, Satish Naik, Mohd Akram, Amit Godara.

Head coach: Mohd Faizal Bin Md Sood

Assistant coach: Akshay Goalkeeping coach: Suraj Jaiswal

Real Madrid into Champions League quarterfinals after shootout win

AGENCIES

MADRID, MAR 13 (UNI)

Real Madrid advanced to the quarterfinals of the Champions League on Wednesday night, triumphing in a penalty shootout against Atletico Madrid after a 1-0 defeat left the tie ending 2-2 on aggregate.

In the shootout, Julian Alvarez slipped while taking his penalty for Atletico, inadvertently touching the ball twice, which was confirmed after a VAR intervention. This incident shifted the score from 2-2 to 2-1 in favor of Real Madrid, with Fede Valverde extending it to 3-1.

Though Jan Oblak saved from Lucas Vazquez, Marcos Llorente's subsequent miss against the crossbar allowed Antonio Rudiger to seal Real Madrid's progression.

The result was harsh on Atletico, who had been the superior team on the night. Los Colchoneros took an early lead when Conor Gallagher equalized the aggregate score with a close-range finish just 30 seconds after kickoff, scoring what turned out to be the game's only goal.

Raul Asensio's failed clearance allowed the ball to reach Atletico's right flank, where Rodrigo de

Paul passed it to Alvarez, whose touch set up Gallagher to slide in and score past Thibaut Courtois.




Real Madrid responded by controlling possession, with Vinicius Junior actively driving down the left wing. Despite this, Atletico's deep defensive setup allowed them to counter-attack, with Alvarez forcing a spectacular save from Courtois in the 25th minute.

Courtois was called upon again in the 35th minute when Antoine Griezmann found space, setting up Alvarez, whose shot was once more saved by Courtois as Atletico continued to create

better chances.

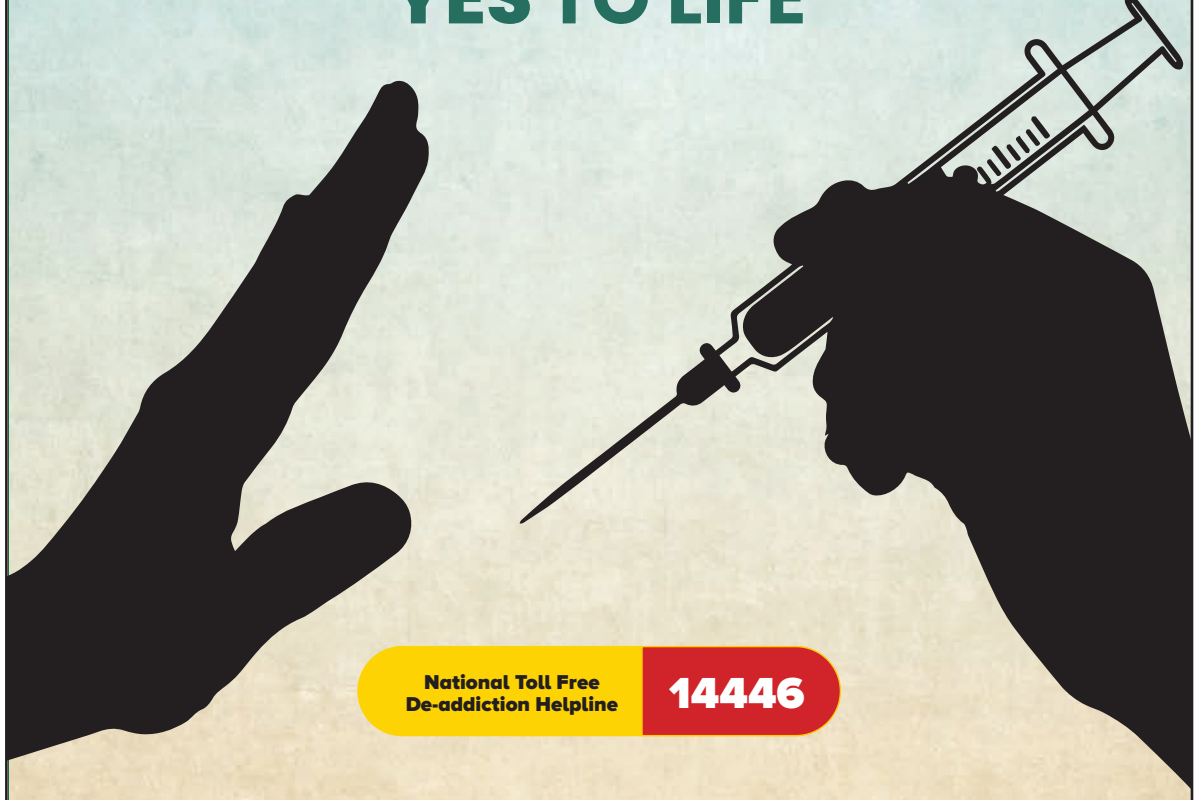
Early in the second half, Courtois showcased his skill by saving Alvarez's strike from outside the penalty area. Atletico maintained its dominance, forcing several corners and narrowly missing with a Clement Lenglet header.

Despite Atletico's control, Real Madrid capitalized on a counter-attack when Griezmann lost possession. The ball found its way to Kylian Mbappe, who charged into the Atletico box, where Lenglet fouled him. Vinicius Junior took the resultant penalty but blazed it over the bar.



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