



## Srinagar emerging as J&K's cultural nerve centre: LG Sinha

Welfare of artisan community and folk-artists is one of my prime objectives: LG Sinha



■ HT News Network

**SRINAGAR, FEBRUARY 28:** Lieutenant Governor Shri Manoj Sinha attended the Srinagar Heritage Festival 'Soan Meeraas' at Kashmir Haat, today.

In his address, the Lieutenant Governor extended his felicitations to all the participating artisans & artists, and appreciated the collaborated initiative by the District Administration Srinagar and Indira Gandhi National Centre for Arts (IGNCA), Regional Centre J&K. He said, the Srinagar Heritage Festival commemorates the achievements and contribution of our great artisans, folk artists, writers and honours our unique and diverse cultural heritage which will inspire the future growth.

The Lieutenant Governor reiterated his resolve to revive the cultural and artistic heritage of Jammu Kashmir and drive positive changes in the lives of the citizens, especially those associated with the world of art, crafts and culture.

"Welfare of artisan community and folk-artists is one of my prime objectives.

I also wish to see that every child is connected to the roots and every youth carrying the rich legacy of artisan community is empowered to contribute in J&K's economic growth," the Lieutenant Governor said.

The Lieutenant Governor highlighted that, in the last four and a half years, under the guidance of Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, well-planned policies and their time-bound implementation has ensured that our craftspeople, artisans and artists are provided with better resources and opportunity to prosper and flourish.

The Lieutenant Governor also spoke on the emergence of Srinagar city as the cultural nerve centre of Jammu Kashmir. He shared the dedicated measures taken by the government to transform the cities of the Union Territory into the confluence of ancient traditions and modern facilities.

He further emphasised the important role of youth, artists community and enlightened citizens in preserving the cultural heritage, and also spreading

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## 4-day wet spell compensates rainfall deficit by 50% in J&K

Water level in Jhelum, streams rises by 3 to 4 ft; Jammu rivers near flood alert level

■ HT NEWS NETWORK/KNO

**Srinagar, Feb 28:** The ongoing 4-day wet spell compensated the precipitation deficiency in Jammu and Kashmir by 50 percent, and also led to the increase in the water level of River Jhelum, life line of Kashmir, and other water bodies by 3-4 feet.

According to the details provided by the Meteorological Centre Srinagar to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), "The current wet spell has brought the deficit



from 80% to nearly 42%. As per the cumulative precipitation during

February 25-28, the highest snow depth of 113 cms has been record-

ed at famous ski-resort, Gulmarg followed by Sonamarg with 75 cm."

In North Kashmir Kupwara and Bandipora districts recorded a rainfall of 79.33 mm and 81.4 mm respectively, while in South Kashmir, Anantnag, Kulgam, Shopian and Pulwama districts recorded a rainfall of 49.6 mm, 60 mm, 26.8 mm and 31.7 mm respectively.

Srinagar recorded 30.5mm precipitation during the last 24 hours while Batote recorded the rainfall of 163.7 mm, highest in all the districts, followed by 118mm in Katra

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## Snowfall Aftermath: 2 flights cancelled, Srinagar-Jammu highway, other roads closed

Over 200 HMVs stranded at Qazigund, says SSP Traffic Rural

■ HT News Network

**Jammu, Feb 28** The fresh spell of rains and snowfall led to the cancellation of two morning flights at Srinagar International Airport on Friday while all the major roads including Srinagar-Jammu National Highway continued to remain closed for the second straight day. As per th

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## MeT predicts more snow, rains till Mar 3

■ HT News Network

**Srinagar, Feb 28:** Weatherman on Friday predicted that Jammu and Kashmir would receive more rain and snow till March 3. Director Meteorological department (MeT), Dr Mukhtar Ahmad while talking to the news agency—said, "There is a forecast of light rain and snow at isolated to scattered places till March 2 while light to moderate rain and snow is expected at many

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## To keep NC-led govt on toes, BJP forms "shadow cabinet"

Senior MLAs tasked to monitor departments held by different ministers

■ HT News Network

**Srinagar, Feb 28:** In a first such move by an opposition party in Jammu & Kashmir, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has formed a "shadow cabinet" to keep a close watch on the performance of the National Conference-led government in the Union Territory. Source-



es told news agency—that BJP has formed a group of senior MLAs to closely examine performance of different departments and question their performance within and outside the Assembly. "The party has tasked senior MLAs, who served as ministers in the previous PDP-BJP government, to closely monitor

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## Ahead of budget session, Congress calls its legislature party meeting on March 2

"Not informed yet about joint meeting": Karra

■ HT News Network

**Srinagar, Feb 28** Ahead of the budget session of the J&K Assembly, the Congress party has scheduled a meeting of its legislature party on March 2 in Jammu.

In a letter, the party's chief whip



and MLA Bandipora, Nizamuddin Bhat, invited all MLAs to attend the meeting on Sunday at 2:00 PM at the party headquarters in Jammu. "Ahead of the upcoming assembly budget session, the high command of the J&K unit of the Indian

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## Ramadan moon not sighted in J&K, 1st day of fasting on Sunday

■ HT News Network

**Gulmarg, Feb 28** jammu and Kashmir Grand Mufti, Nasir-ul-Islam Friday said that the crescent moon has not been sighted, thus, the first day of Ramadan will be on Sunday (March 02). Speaking to the news agency—the Grand Mufti said that no witnesses or

evidences were received from anywhere about the sighting of Ramadan moon today. "Therefore, the first day of fasting will be on Sunday," he said.

Earlier this month, he constituted a moon-sighting committee for J&K with Valley's chief cleric and Hurriyat chairman Mirwaiz Umar Farooq as its member. This comes in the wake of

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## PDD to 'avoid' power curtailment at Sahoar, Iftar times

Incessant rains push hydel power generation

■ HT News Network

**Srinagar, Feb 28** The Power Development Department (PDD) has decided to avoid the power curtailment at Sahoar and Iftar times in the feasible areas in the holy month of Ramadhan.

The department in this regard is likely to hold the important meeting on Saturday to discuss the mechanism and strategy to implement the new schedule for the month of Ramadhan.

A top official of PDD informed the news agency—that we have reduced the power curtailment in almost all areas but in the month of Ramadhan, we will try to avoid the curtailment at Sehri and Iftar times."

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## Identify, deport Rohingya and Bangladeshi intruders: Amit Shah directs security agencies

■ HT News Network

**New Delhi, Feb 28:** Describing illegal entry of Bangladeshis and Rohingyas into the country as an issue of national security, Union Home Minister, Amit Shah on Friday directed the security agencies to identify the intruders and deport them.

Chairing a meeting to review the national capital's law-and-



order situation, Shah, according to the news agency—said that illegal entry of Bangladeshis and Rohingyas needs to be dealt with strictly. "Stern action should be taken against the entire network that helps Bangladeshis and Rohingyas intruders enter the country, get their documents made and facilitate their stay here.

The issue of illegal intruders is also related to national security,

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## J&K has additional Agri credit potential of nearly Rs 3000 cr: Chief Secretary

'Khetscore' to determine credit worthiness of each farm

■ HT News Network/UNI

**JAMMU, FEBRUARY 28:** Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo, while taking stock of progress registered under different credit linked schemes of the Agriculture Production Department (APD) remarked that agriculture sector in J&K has an additional credit potential of around Rs 3000 crore if tapped optimally by the financial institutions here.

Besides Principal Secretary, APD and MD, J&K Bank, the meeting was attended by MD, HADP/JKICP; DG, Budget; Deputy



Commissioners; HoDs of APD; Convenor, UTLBC; representatives from BISAG-N and other concerned officers while outstation

officers participated virtually.

The Chief Secretary impressed upon the Deputy Commissioners and the concerned

department to be in close coordination with J&K Bank in order to enhance the approval and disbursement rate of the applications. He said that there is still greater potential of growth in this sector as the banks could tap additional Rs 3000 crore business by laying more focus on it. He advised the financial institutions to tap this potential for there is lesser NPA rate as well. He maintained that almost half of the applications received by the department on the portal should be credit linked as the products are highly attractive guaranteeing the interest subvention and moratorium

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## 11 years on, Tral-Wahab Sahab road awaits completion

■ HT News Network

**Pulwama, Feb 28:** The residents of Tral and Khrew areas of South Kashmir's Pulwama district have expressed resentment against the government for "failing" to restart work on Syedabad-Wahab Sahab road stretch for a long time now.

Locals from these hamlets told the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) that the 8-kilometre stretch with an estimated cost of around Rs 16 crore was supposed to connect Syedabad-Pastuna area of Tral to Wahab Sahab Shaar of Pampore Tehsil.

The road will be the

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## SED Shortlists 14 Candidates for Appointment to Post of Chairman, Director SCERT

■ HT News Network

**Srinagar, Feb 28:** Government of Jammu and Kashmir's School Education Department has short-listed 14 candidates for roles of Chairman Jammu and Kashmir Board of School Education (JKBOSE) and Director of the State Council of Educational Research and Training (SCERT).

The selection follows an advertisement issued by SED, issued on December 30, 2024, inviting applications through the department's official website.

A Search Committee, led by the Financial Commissioner/Additional

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## Govt extends winter vacation for Kashmir schools till Mar-06

■ HT News Network

**Srinagar, Feb 28:** Education Minister Sakina Masood Itoo Friday said that winter vacations for all classes in Kashmir schools have been extended till March-6. Itoo said, "Keeping in view the prevalent weather conditions, the government has decided to extend the winter vacation for all government and recognised private schools of Kashmir region.

Talking to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), Itoo said, "The schools in the Valley will reopen on March-7

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# ELECRAMA 2025 concludes successfully, showcases innovations & industry leadership

■ HT News Network

SRINAGAR, Feb 28: The 16th edition of ELECRAMA 2025 organized by Indian Electrical and Electronic Manufacturers' Association (IEEMA) wrapped up on a high note, reinforcing its position as the premier global platform for electrical and allied electronics industry. This edition broke previous records, drawing over 1,000+ exhibitors, 400,000+ business visitor footfalls, and generating an estimated \$20 billion in business enquiries—a testament to the event's unmatched scale, influence, and global appeal.

ELECRAMA 2025 emerged as an important platform for industry engagement, showcasing impactful B2B meetings, insightful thought leadership

sessions, and constructive policy dialogues that united both global and Indian stakeholders. The event successfully facilitated over 15,000 B2B meetings and attracted more than 500 international buyers from 80 countries, further solidifying India's stature as a reliable partner within the global electrical ecosystem.

One of the biggest highlights this year was the launch of the New Energies Pavilion, a game-changing showcase of breakthrough technologies in Battery Storage, EV Charging Infrastructure, Digital Energy, Solar Modules, Solar Inverters, and more. This dedicated space showcased India's rapid strides towards a sustainable and future-ready energy landscape. The global interest at ELECRAMA 2025 has increased. While attending the event



Minister Bachir Camara, Deputy Minister, MEHH, Guinea said, "India's advancements in energy and digitalization offer valuable insights for developing nations like Guinea. Strengthening collaborations with India can help us enhance our electricity systems and

adopt innovative solutions. Platforms like ELECRAMA provide an excellent opportunity to explore cutting-edge technologies, engage with industry leaders, and understand best practices in renewable energy, electrification, and carbon footprint reduction. Events like

these are crucial in fostering global partnerships, allowing us to learn from India's expertise and implement sustainable energy solutions that will drive our nation's growth. We believe this is the right time to leverage India's achievements and work together for a brighter, more

energy-secure future."

ELECRAMA 2025 also witnessed four MoU signings, laying the foundation for transformative collaborations in the power and electrical sector. These agreements mark a significant step in driving innovation, industry partnerships, and next-generation energy solutions.

As the event draws its curtains, the significance of this year's edition Sunil Singhvi, President, IEEMA said "ELECRAMA 2025 has surpassed all expectations, marking yet another milestone in its journey as the world's leading platform for the electrical and power industry. The remarkable increase in visitor footfall compared to the previous edition underscores the growing global interest in India's energy and power capabilities. With

over 400,000 business visitor footfalls, ELECRAMA has demonstrated its ability to bring together industry leaders, policymakers, and innovators to drive impactful collaborations and business opportunities."

The event inaugurated by Manohar Lal Khattar, Union Minister of Power and Housing & Urban Affairs, highlighted the government's commitment to strengthening India's energy infrastructure. Delivering the keynote address, Piyush Goyal, Union Minister of Commerce & Industry emphasized India's energy transition, policy direction, and technological advancements. He urged the electrical industry to unify major expos, creating a world-class platform to position India as a global hub for energy and electrical solutions.

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LG

awareness on environmental protection. "Preservation and promotion of heritage is crucial for sustainable development of the cities and to improve urban quality of life. I believe culture is a way of life and we must involve young generations, inheritors of our rich legacy, to protect cultural and natural heritage," the Lieutenant Governor said.

On the occasion, the Lieutenant Governor released a book titled "Iconic Women of J&K". He also felicitated the students and artists participating in Srinagar Heritage Festival.

Earlier, the Lieutenant Governor visited the Traditional village, Art Gallery and witnessed exhibitions, live demonstrations of sports and various traditional cultural activities.

During the Srinagar Heritage Festival, a number of events were organised at Jhelum Riverfront, Dal Lake and Kashmir Haat providing a memorable experience for participants and visitors, besides building a strong sense of identity, fostering community cohesion.

Sh Vijay Kumar Bidhuri, Divisional Commissioner Kashmir; Sh Rajiv Omprakash, DIG CKR; Dr Bilal Mohi-Ud-Din Bhat, Deputy Commissioner Srinagar; Ms Shruti Awasthi, Regional Director, IGNC; senior officials of Security forces, Police and Civil Administration, artisans, artists, youth and people from all walks of life were present.

4 DAY

and 100 mm in Banihal.

With the deficiency reducing to 42 per cent only from January 01, 2025 to February 28, 2025, the lowest deficit at present is recorded in Kulgam with 69 per cent and followed by Shopian and Srinagar, the summer capital of Jammu and Kashmir at 64 per cent each.

The lowest deficiency has been recorded in Rajouri and Udhampur at just 3 and 4 per cent respectively till today. Samba, as per the details is the only station across Jammu and Kashmir with average normal precipitation as against the normal rainfall of 91.6 mm, the district has received 91.5 mm till today.

Water level in Jhelum increases

Moreover, for the first time in the past three months, the river Jhelum has recorded a rise in water level by almost 3-4 feet.

From -1.01 ft till February 25, the water level at Sangam station was recorded 2.31 ft at 7:01 PM while at Ram Munshi Bagh, the water was flowing at 4.75 ft. The other streams too have recorded the rise in water level including Vishow Nallah where the 1589.6 m gauge was recorded this evening while Lidder was flowing at 1954.2 m and Doodhganga at 1585.3 m.

JAMMU RIVERS NEAR FLOOD ALERT LEVEL

An Independent Weather Forecaster, Faizan Arif Keng in a statement has mentioned that following heavy rainfall in Jammu region, the water levels of the Tawi River, along with other rivers and streams, have risen significantly, now just a few feet below the alert level. "Residents are advised to exercise caution and refrain from going near the rivers until conditions improve," he said.

Pertinently, the weatherman had predicted a four-day wet spell from February 25 to February 28 while 'yellow and orange' alerts were also issued for the four days.

For the next three days till March 03, the weatherman here has predicted light rain and snow at isolated to scattered places—(KNO)

CS

period that is not available anywhere else. Dulloo enjoined upon the Bank to designate some of their best human resources to look after the progress on these schemes to improve their uptake and increase their number proportionate to the total number of applicants registered on the official portal. He also reviewed scheme-wise progress and pendency in each district and enquired from respective DCs about the reasons of poor

performance, if found anywhere. He took note of the applications pending from last more than 100 days and directed the banks to clear the backlog without any further delay. He also laid emphasis on creation of awareness among the public besides handholding them by helping in generating successful DPRs thereby increasing the rate of approval of their applications. He asked for assisting people to have fair idea about the schemes, credit and benefits available for them based upon their areas of interest.

The Chief Secretary also sought suggestions from the Department, DCs and the Bank officers about the measures needed to be taken to improve the overall performance of these schemes for these are in vogue now for the 2nd year. He asked them to further improve the progress in high density plantation, distribution of smart cards under KCC, KCC term loans, PM Kisan, AIF, AHIDF, PMFBY and other similar schemes.

On the occasion, Principal Secretary, APD, Shailendra Kumar, informed the meeting that the Department targets coverage of 13 lakh farmers under KCC scheme which currently hovers at around 10.82 lakh active customers. He also revealed that the Department in coordination with the banks is in a process of streamlining the credit availing facility for farmers by developing an IT solution named 'KhetScore' to determine the credit worthiness of each farm. He made out that the same would be done based upon historical data, external risk assessment and taking of geographical factors into account.

MD, HADP, Rahul Yadav, informed the meeting about other measures being taken by the Department to improve the uptake of these schemes by the farmers. He also threw light on the overall progress of these schemes over the past few months.

The MD also enumerated certain measures including launching of IT tools like credit scheme advisor, DPR generating portal and Grievance redressal portal with banks for real time registration and tracking of credit related grievances by the banks and administration on the directions of the Chief Secretary.

Later, the Chief Secretary had live demonstration of these developing applications as given by the BISAG-N. He asked them to converge all the Agriculture related tools and apps on a single platform which would give access to them with ease and comfort.

He also released a number of publications depicting the progress and success stories of HADP and other programmes to revolutionise Agriculture sector besides increasing the farmers income manifold across the UT of J&K.

TRAL

shortcut way for the people of Tral parts towards Khrew Pampore, and also reduce travelling between these two areas, they said.

According to the locals, the foundation stone of the road was laid in the year 2015 by then MLA Mushtaq Ahmad Shah, following which the work was started but due to the unknown reasons, it was stopped.

Shahid Ahmad, a resident of Tral said there has been no work on the road for the last 10-11 years and the people of both areas have been waiting for the completion of this vital project, which is going to connect Tral directly with Khrew and Pampore while bypassing Awantipora.

With the completion of this stretch, the people of over a dozen villages will benefit and it will help in bringing this picturesque area especially Wasturwan on the tourism map, he said.

Mushtaq Ahmad, a resident of Pampore area said that this route will prove beneficial for people of both areas but the government has neglected this project.

The locals requested the concerned authorities to look into the matter at an earliest and

take immediate steps in this regard. They have sought attention of Chief Minister Omar Abdullah along with MLAs of both Tral and Pampore constituencies.

An official, while acknowledging that people of both sides have been waiting for a long time for completion of this road, said that they are expecting that the work on this stretch will be started soon.

He said that a Detailed Project Report (DPR) of around Rs 26 crore was submitted for its construction and they are yet to get a green signal in this regard—(KNO)

SCERT

Chief Secretary of the Higher Education Department, convened on February 17, 2025, to finalize the shortlist.

Among those candidates shortlisted for the roles, as per news agency Kashmir Bulletin, include; Munshi Tehmina Yousuf (Principal, Islamia College of Science and Commerce, Srinagar); Dr. Sunil Gupta (Principal, GDC Basohli); Raj Kumar (Joint Registrar, University of Jammu); Naveen Anand (Dean Academic Affairs, Cluster University Jammu); Dr. Surinder Kour (Dean, Cluster University of Kashmir); Manisha Kohli (Principal, HED J&K); Syed Zahoor Ahmad Geelani (Dean & Head School Education, Central University of Kashmir); Dr. Shehnaz Iqbal Qureshi (Deputy Registrar, JUST Awantipora); Dr. Twinkle Suri (Principal, GDC Samba); Jahangir Iqbal Tantray (Co-ordinator Head Department of Persian, UoK); Abid Hussain (Additional Commissioner, JKBOSE); and Sindhu Kapoor (Joint Director JKSCERT), all of whom applied for both posts.

Among those who have applied and subsequently shortlisted for the role of Chairman JKBOSE, include; Dr. Jatinder Khajuria and Dr. Sudhir Singh (Joint Secretary, JKBOSE).

The shortlisted candidates have been directed to appear for an interaction with the Search Committee on March 5, 2025. (KB)

VACATIONS

instead of March-01."

The minister further said that in case any student enrolled for the board exams couldn't reach the exam centre, the government will make sure that it will conduct their exam later.

Meanwhile, the authorities have extended winter vacation for all schools in the Gurez Valley of north Kashmir till March-8.

The decision comes in wake of heavy snowfall, and prevailing weather conditions across Jammu and Kashmir.

"Due to severe weather, movement of students and school staff has been disrupted. The decision to extend winter vacation has been taken for the wellbeing and safety of students and staff," an official said.

He said that heads of all institutions within the subdivision have been directed to ensure compliance with the extended winter vacation schedule.

In the meantime, following the bad weather conditions, JKBOSE also postponed all exams of 10th to 12th classes scheduled on March-01 and March-03 in hard zones.

JKBOSE in an order said, "In view of inclement weather, the examinations for classes 10th, 11th and 12th scheduled to be held on 01-03-2025 and 03-03-2025 as per date sheet already issued, are hereby postponed and rescheduled."

The board said that the examinations that were earlier scheduled to be held on March-01 for classes 10th and 11th will be held on March-25. In case of 12th standard, the examinations that were scheduled to be held on March-01 will be held on March-24.

JKBOSE in the meantime further said that the time and venue of the examinations will remain unchanged—(KNO)

HIGHWAYS

e news agency—, two flights including 6E 2641 from Delhi and 6E 262 from Srinagar

were cancelled this morning due to inclement weather conditions.

However, an official said that other morning flights faced a delay of 30 to 50 minutes today.

Meanwhile, all highways and major roads remained closed for vehicular movement for the second straight day today.

The Jammu-Srinagar National Highway remained closed due to landslides at over a dozen places in Ramban district, traffic department officials said.

An official said that the highway was closed for traffic on Thursday due to incessant rain, shooting stones, landslides, and mudslides between Nashri and the Navyug Tunnel. Moreover, a section of the road sunk at Mehad, Ramban.

He said authorities were working since Thursday to clear the landslides and shooting stones to restore traffic on the highway, connecting Kashmir with the rest of the country. "Commuters are advised to avoid traveling on the Jammu-Srinagar highway until the weather improves and the road is clear," he said.

Talking to KNO, Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) (Traffic) Rural Kashmir, Ravinder Pal Singh said that more than 200 Heavy Motor Vehicles (HMs) are stranded on the Qazigund side of the highway.

He said that the condition of the highway in the Banihal-Ramban sector remains poor due to shooting stones and landslides, but restoration work is being carried out on a war footing. "People should not travel until there are official directions allowing traffic on the highway. Travelers should plan accordingly. Priority will be given to vehicles already stranded on the highway. First, light motor vehicles (LMVs) will be allowed to move towards their destinations, followed by HMs if the road is cleared," he said.

The other roads including Kishtwar-Sinthan-Anantnag road, Srinagar-Sonamarg-Gumri, Mughal Road and Baderwah-Chamba road also remained closed, officials said. Moreover, the train services were also affected this morning. Train services were partially affected due to snow accumulation—(KNO)

MET

places on March 3."

"The weather will remain generally dry in J&K from March 4 to March 8," he added.

Meanwhile, in its advisory, the MeT said that temporary disruption of surface transportation is expected mainly over Sadhna pass, Razdan Pass, Sonamarg-Zojila-Gumri axis, Mughal Road, Sinthan pass & other major roads of hilly districts in the coming days.

Tourists, travelers and transporters are advised to plan accordingly & follow administration and traffic advisory, it reads, adding that the farmers are advised to suspend irrigation & other farm operations.

Landslides, mudslides and shooting stones at vulnerable places, it reads and added that there is a possibility of snow avalanches over higher reaches—(KNO)

PDD

The official further said that in case there will be overload in any feeder, then the department will have to curtail further power.

About the local power generation from the plants of Kashmir region, the official said that the production has slightly improved post fresh rain and snowfall.

"In the previous weeks, the average power generation was nearly 40-45 Megawatts from the local power plants of the Kashmir region. However, as of now we are generating nearly 70 MWs of power," the official said.

The official further said that power generation capacity is likely to improve further in the coming weeks.

Notably, the hydel power generation from the power plants across Jammu and Kashmir has further reduced by five percent—owing to the low water level, in the past one month,

Overall, the hydro power generation from the local plants in Jammu and Kashmir had reduced by 84.17 percent.

In the month of January, the Power Development Department (PDD) was generating nearly 250 Megawatts of power from the local hydel projects that amounts to 20 percent of the total generation capacity.

However, in the ongoing month, the power generation has further reduced by five percent—(KNO)

RANDAN

a controversy over moon sighting last year, which split local Muslims over the commencement of Ramadan—(KNO)

HM

and it should be dealt with strictly. They should be identified and deported," he said—(KNO)

BJP

departments assigned to them for assembly interventions and other issues," they said. According to sources, the leader of opposition Sunil Sharma has played a key role in the formation of the "shadow cabinet".

Sharma, who is close to the top leadership of BJP, was chosen by the party as its first leader of opposition in Jammu & Kashmir after the party secured 29 seats in 2024 Assembly polls.

Sources privy to the development disclosed that the party has assigned different departments to its senior MLAs to lead the assessment and challenge the ministers holding them within and outside the Assembly.

"This move will enhance the party's role in scrutinising government actions and policies. It would also help us in effectively raising public issues within and outside the Assembly," a former BJP minister, who is part of the group, told KNO on condition of anonymity.

The move comes ahead of the budget session of the Assembly, which is expected to be stormy over issues ranging from Article 370, reservation row and other issues.

For the first time in history, the BJP is the main opposition party in Jammu & Kashmir. Before 2008, BJP never crossed a double-digit seat tally in the Jammu and Kashmir Assembly. In 2008 polls, it managed to secure 11 seats. In 2014, it secured 25 seats and became part of any government for the first time in J&K's history—(KNO)

KARRA

National Congress has desired to convene a meeting of party legislators. All Honourable members of the Congress legislature party are requested to ensure their presence at the meeting scheduled for Sunday, March 2, at 2:00 PM at the Congress party headquarters, Jammu," reads the letter, a copy of which is in possession of the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO).

As previously reported, the National Conference (NC) has also scheduled its legislature party meeting around the same time at the Chief Minister's official residence on Wazarat Road, Jammu.

Meanwhile, Congress leadership stated that they have not been officially informed by the National Conference about any joint meeting of legislators of the ruling alliance. "We have not been informed about it yet," said Pradesh Congress Committee president and MLA Central Shalteng, Tariq Hamid Karra, when asked whether any joint meeting of the ruling allies has been scheduled ahead of the budget session—(KNO)





# CUKashmir's Science campus celebrates National Science Day

HT News Network

Ganderbal, Feb 28: The Departments of Biotechnology, Plant Sciences, Chemistry, and Animal Sciences, (Science Campus) in collaboration with Directorate of Students Welfare, Central University of Kashmir (CUKashmir) celebrated National Science Day here Friday. The theme of the event for this year was, "Empowering Indian Youth for Global Leadership in Science and Innovation for Viksit Bharat".

Addressing the participants, Director Campus and Dean Faculty of Life Sciences, Prof. Abid Hamid Dar stressed the importance of promoting scientific temper and rational thinking among the students. He emphasized that the dream of Viksit Bharat can only be realized through the collective efforts of all. He



deliberated on the global impact of Nobel Prizes in Sciences on the field of medical Sciences. Prof. Abid highlighted how Nobel Prize-winning discoveries have significantly influenced healthcare practices and advancements around the world, leading to improved treatments and diagnoses for the diseases affecting people globally. He thanked Vice Chancellor, Prof. A Ravinder Nath, Dean Academics Affairs, Prof. Shahid Rasool and Registrar, Prof. M Afzal

Zargar for their guidance and motivation. In his speech, Dean Physical and Chemical Sciences, Prof. M Yousuf encouraged students to think differently and embrace innovation to drive India's development in Science & Technology. He spoke about the need for creative thinking to propel India forward in the scientific realm.

Dr. Dharmendra, Associate Prof. Deptt. of Biotechnology spoke about Research-Industry partnerships, Startups India,

Digital India and other programmes to harness the collective potential of Indian Youth.

Dr. Anil Chandra, Assistant Prof. Deptt. of Biotechnology emphasized the importance of inspiring the youth to actively participate in realizing the vision of a Viksit Bharat. He praised the skill, talent and abilities of Indian youth and the ways to nurture this generation of innovators and leaders in shaping the nation's future. Dr. Rifat Akbar, Assistant Prof. Deptt. of Chemistry spoke about, 'Empowering Indian Youth: the key to global leadership'. She emphasized on various initiatives taken by the Government of India to empower youth. Earlier, in her welcome address, Dr. Shahnaz Perveen, Assistant Prof. Deptt. of Plant Sciences gave insights on how Science & Technology should work hand.

# SMC seals commercial structure at Nawab Bazar for Building Violations

HT News Network

SRINAGAR, FEBRUARY 28: In a proactive measure to uphold building regulations in Srinagar, the Srinagar Municipal Corporation (SMC) has sealed a commercial structure located at Shah Mohalla Nawab Bazar. This decisive action follows directives from Commissioner SMC, Dr. Owais Ahmed, in response to significant violations of approved building permission.

The enforcement operation was executed under the stringent supervision of the Enforcement Wing of SMC, ensuring compliance with established protocols. The sealed structure was found to be in violation of the guidelines set forth by the competent authority, underscoring the urgent need for adherence to legal building practices.

Commissioner SMC reiterated the corporation's zero-tolerance policy towards building violations. He urged the residents of Srinagar to strictly comply with approved permissions and regulations, stating, "This action serves as a clear message



that the SMC is dedicated to enforce compliance and safeguard the interests of the community."

Dr. Owais emphasized that the SMC will continue to closely monitor construction activities throughout the city and take necessary actions against any infractions. He highlighted the importance of maintaining the integrity of Srinagar's urban landscape as a shared responsibility, calling upon the general Public to

cooperate with the regulations established. The enforcement operation was executed under the stringent supervision of the Enforcement Wing of SMC, ensuring compliance with established protocols. The sealed structure was found to be in violation of the guidelines set forth by the competent authority, underscoring the urgent need for adherence to legal building practices.

# ACS Education visits Amar Singh College; reviews functioning

HT News Network

SRINAGAR, FEBRUARY 28: Additional Chief Secretary (ACS), Education, Shantmanu, visited the Amar Singh College. The ACS was accompanied by Director Colleges, Professor Sheikh Ajaz Bashir. Principal, Professor Aijaz Ahmad Hakak, presented a comprehensive presentation on the academic, administrative and developmental progress of the institution besides its future vision plan.

During his visit, Shantmanu had a detailed review of the college's academic performance, enrolment trends, gender parity, student-faculty ratio and infrastructural development. He also inspected the newly constructed state-of-the-art Science Block and the fully automated college library, equipped with RFID technology. The college librarian demonstrated the automated system, showcasing searching, issuance and return of books efficiently through the RFID system. Interacting with the Principal and faculty members, Shantmanu emphasised the importance of competency-building for personal excellence. He highlighted key areas such as role of the Art of Living in professional growth, drug de-addiction initiatives and mental health support for students.

The visit concluded with the ACS reiterating the commitment of the Higher Education Department towards fostering academic excellence and holistic student development in the region. The visit concluded with the ACS reiterating the commitment of the Higher Education Department towards fostering academic excellence and holistic student development in the region.

# School Education Department organizes one-day conference on Transforming Education in Srinagar.

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SRINAGAR, 28th February 2025 The National Education Policy 2020 is being implemented in Jammu and Kashmir and feedback is being sought from all the stakeholders to address the challenges faced in this regard. It was expressed by the Financial Commissioner and Additional Chief Secretary of School Education and Higher Education Departments Shantmanu while participating as the Chief guest in the one-day conference titled "Transforming Education for a Future -Ready Generation" at Women's College Srinagar today.

Addressing the conference, the Additional Chief Secretary said that when we talk about Transforming Education for a Future-Ready Generation, it is imperative that we all should work together to get the positive results in this regard. Shantmanu said that it is the responsibility of all government institutions, NGOs, other stakeholders, I mean all of us to see what has been done so far in the field of Transforming Education and what more needs to be done in the future. ACS asked the students to actively participate in curricular as well as extra-curricular activities,



because these are the requirements which are useful at every step in real life. During the conference, Director School Education Kashmir Dr. G.N. Itoo summarized the progress being made in implementing the National Education Policy 2020. In his speech, DSEK said that during the upcoming session, all steps will be taken to implement NEP 2020 and the teaching staff, schoolheads and students will be informed about the adoption of various tools to deal with the challenges faced in this regard.

Dr. Mushtaq Marghoob, a renowned psychiatrist of the valley, also expressed his views during the

conference. During the event the "Academic Planner" for the schools of Kashmir Division was also released by ACS. A panel discussion on the topic, "Transforming Education" was also held during the conference in which Professor Seema Naz, Principal of Institute of Advanced Studies in Education (IASE) also participated. All CEOs of Kashmir Division, Principals of Higher Secondary Schools and officials of several voluntary organizations were present at the occasion. During the conference, students and others who have performed well in various fields of education were honored.

# After SP College "ACT" Performed "PAGAL KOUN" in Tagore Hall Srinagar

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Srinagar/February 28 After SP College Srinagar the artists associated with the "ACT" played the Urdu stage drama "PAGAL KOUN" written by Zahid Husain in the Tagore Hall Srinagar under the direction of Mushtaque Ali Ahmad Khan. The audience appreciated the actors and the drama director. The theatre group headed by Mushtaque Ali Ahmad Khan has come forward with a better thinking for tomorrow and the theatre chief aims to promote the Modern Theatre as well as attract a new generation to the theater for which we have renamed actors Creative Theatre and named 'Act' for a better time. Mushtaque Ali added that this drama is a proof of the theatre's power and we are also looking forward to sharing it with our drama fans in the future. He said that the drama is a new milestone at the Modern Theatre. The story of this drama is based on human condition. Aqib Halim, Arjumand Andrabi, Abdul Basit, and Suhaib Latif performed to win the hearts of the audience with their outstanding performance. The work of Make-up done by Gul Javed Khan and Barkat Ali. Commandant JKAP 11th Bn, Security SSP Nighat Aman attend

the function as chief guest, former head of All India.

# CS accords farewell to Syed Shafi; hails his 37 years of dedicated service

HT News Network



JAMMU, FEBRUARY 28: Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo, today accorded an affectionate farewell to Syed Mohammad Shafi, the longest serving employee of Chief Secretary Office. Speaking on the occasion, the Chief Secretary lauded Shafi's unwavering dedication, calling him an upright official known for his punctuality and ever smiling demeanour. He remarked that officials like Shafi leave a lasting impression and are fondly remembered by other colleagues. He extended his best wishes for Shafi's health, happiness, and success post retirement life. Several officers and colleagues also expressed their appreciation for Shafi's long and distinguished service. Among those who spoke and conveyed their best wishes to the retiree were Special Secretary in CS Office, K.S. Chib, Deputy Secretary, Rakesh Sharma, Under Secretaries, Mohit Raina, Saba Noor, Gaurav Gupta and other staff members from the Chief Secretary's personal section. The farewell gathering was marked by gratitude and fond memories, reflecting the deep respect and affection Shafi has earned over the years. His other colleagues also reminisced about the affectionate moments they had spent together.

# Sakeena Itoo reviews preparations for International Women's Day celebration across J&K Advocates recognition, celebration of contributions of womenfolk

SRINAGAR, JAMMU, FEBRUARY 28: Minister for Health and Medical Education, Social Welfare and Education, Sakeena Itoo, today emphasized the importance of recognizing and celebrating the contributions of womenfolk in various fields across Jammu and Kashmir.

The Minister made these remarks while chairing a meeting held at the Civil Secretariat here to review the preparations for forthcoming International Women's Day being held on 8th March.

Commissioner Secretary, Social Welfare Department, Sanjeev Verma; Commissioner Secretary, Culture department, K Ramesh Kumar; Director Social Welfare Kashmir, Mohammad Akbar Wani; Director Social Welfare Jammu, Rupesh Kumar; Director School Education Jammu; Director Colleges J&K; Director Health Services Jammu, Director Health Services Kashmir; Mission Directors of ICDS, ICPS and Mission Shakti besides other concerned officers attended the meeting, either in person or virtually.



The Minister stressed on the need to highlight contributions of women in various fields for awareness of common masses, particularly the female fraternity. "We must not only acknowledge the incredible contributions of women in every field but also ensure they have opportunities and support to excel further in their goals and dreams" Sakeena main-

tained.

She asked the officers to promote initiatives that empower women folk and create awareness among them about various initiatives of the government for their empowerment. "Every woman should know about the schemes and support systems available to them to help her achieve her ambitions and purposes of

life", Sakeena stated.

The Minister called upon the social welfare, education and health departments to work in coordination and organize this day collectively. She asked them to organize awareness programs and felicitations of women achievers in their respective districts. She also asked them to constitute teams in their respective districts for better coordination and smooth conduct of the programme.

While speaking on the significance of Women's Day, Sakeena reiterated the government for gender equality and called for collective efforts to create a more inclusive society. She encouraged participation from all sections of society to celebrate the strength and resilience of women.

During the meeting, Commissioner Secretary, Social Welfare informed the Minister about the preparations being put in place by the department for the International Women's Day scheduled to be held on 8th March across Jammu and Kashmir.



## EDITORIAL

Board authorities  
get more time in  
procuring text-books

As the Department of School Education extended the winter vacations for the schools of the Kashmir valley for six more days the Jammu & Kashmir Board of School Education has got more time in procuring text-books for the various classes that are not available in the market as on date. Many text-books for the different classes are not available in the market and as such the students as well as their parents are very much worried about the same.

Given the fact that the schools will reopen on Friday, March 7 one can expect that the text-books not available in the market will be available by that date. Not to talk of the supply of text-books to the booksellers across the valley, the text-books have not even been provided to the authorities of the different government schools. As a result of this the students of both the government and private schools are at the receiving end and there seems to be no end to their ordeal.

It is high time the higher-ups of the education department take the matter seriously so that the text-books are available to the students well on time. Once the text-books are available on time the students would be able to start their education from the scheduled date and there would be no delay in the same. Starting the education on the due date means that the examination for the different classes would be held on time and as such the valuable time of the students is saved.

It is imperative that responsibility is fixed on the concerned stakeholders in the Board so that nobody runs away and the system is streamlined. As on date it is observed that there is a blame game when it comes to the supply of text-books for the government schools and the booksellers. At the end of the day it is the student who suffers if the text-books are not available to him and her.

It is important that there is no mental agony for the students and all the concerned need to chip in. There is a need to enhance the capacity of the publication division at the Board of School Education so that there is no more fallacy as far as publishing of text-books is concerned. Improvement in this regard is very important and one can hope that this takes place sooner than later.



**AUBAID AHMAD AKHOO**  
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"Ramadan is not just about changing our schedules; it is about changing our hearts."

Ramadan, the holiest month in Islam, is not merely an adjustment in routine—it is an invitation to a profound spiritual transformation. It is a time when the gates of Heaven are opened, the gates of Hell are closed, and the devils are chained. The divine command to fast is not just about refraining from food and drink; it is about restraining worldly desires, cultivating obedience, and attaining piety.

In the words of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH): "Whoever fasts in the month of Ramadan out of faith and in the hope of reward, their past sins shall be forgiven."

This sacred month serves as a beacon of faith, an opportunity to purify our hearts, seek divine mercy, and recalibrate our connection with Allah. It is a time for introspection—a moment to liberate ourselves from the illusions of the material world and immerse in the sweetness of faith.

The Anticipation of Ramadan As the month of Rajab approaches, the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) would fervently supplicate:

"O Allah, bless us in the months of Rajab and Sha'ban, and grant us the arrival of Ramadan."

The very name "Ramadan," derived from the Arabic root ramida (meaning "scorching heat"), symbolizes the burning away of sins and the purification of the soul. This blessed month arrives as divine mercy, offering a refuge from spiritual stagnation. Through fasting, prayer, and self-discipline, we rekindle our bond with Allah and embark on a journey of renewal.

Fasting: A Pathway to Taqwa Fasting is more than abstinence from food; it is an exercise in patience, gratitude, and self-restraint. The Qur'an declares:

"O you who have believed, fasting has been decreed upon you as it was decreed upon those before you, so that you may attain righteousness." (Al-Baqarah 2:183)

By fasting, we mirror the purity of angels, detaching from earthly desires to nurture spiritual elevation. The Prophet (PBUH) emphasized:

"For everything, there is Zakat, and the Zakat of the body is fasting."

In a world consumed by indulgence, fasting becomes



a means to cultivate taqwa—a state of God-consciousness that shields us from sin. It instills within us the discipline to resist temptation, fostering a character rooted in righteousness.

Ramadan: A Time for Worship and Reflection

Ramadan is a spiritual training ground, urging believers to enhance their devotion. Beyond the obligatory fast, true engagement in this sacred month entails:

**Increasing Worship**

The below mentioned verses of Alama Iqbal resonate deeply, compelling us to reflect on our spiritual state

Goongi ho gayi aaj kuch zuban kehte kehte Hichkicha gaya main khud ko Musalman kehte kehte Yeh baat nai ki mujhe is pe yaqeen nahi,

Bas darr gaya khud ko sahib-e-iman kehte kehte.

Ramadan is not merely a month of fasting but a time of intense self-examination, devotion, and transformation. It arrives as a divine gift, urging believers to realign their lives with faith, sincerity, and discipline. However, have we truly embraced the essence of this sacred month, or are we merely observing its outer rituals?

Skipping prayers while fasting contradicts the essence of Ramadan. The true spirit lies in strengthening our connection with Allah through additional acts of worship. Engage in:

Tahajjud (Night Prayer): A special prayer before dawn, fostering a deeper bond with Allah.

Taraweeh: A nightly practice reinforcing discipline and devotion.

Nafl Prayers: Voluntary prayers that elevate spiritual ranks.

Strengthening Our Relationship with the Qur'an

"Meri almaari main gard se bhari kitaab ka jo poocha,

Main gadd gaya zameen main Quran kehte kehte." (Alama Iqbal)

The Qur'an was revealed in Ramadan as a guide for humanity, yet it remains neglected in many households. Ramadan is the perfect time to:

Recite the Qur'an with understanding. Reflect on its meanings. Implement its teachings in daily life.

The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) himself increased his Qur'an recitation during Ramadan, reinforcing its significance.

Correct Recitation of the Holy Quran in Taraweeh:

During this blessed month, it is imperative for every believer to ensure that the recitation of the Quran in Taraweeh prayers is conducted with utmost care and reverence. Rushing through the recitation is contrary to the majesty of Almighty Allah, and the Quran itself admonishes those who recite it haphazardly. Sadly, there have been instances where the Imam, due to haste, fails to enunciate the words of the Quran correctly. Surah Al-Fatiha is sometimes recited in a single breath, and the bowing, prostration, and Tashahhud are not performed properly. Furthermore, Taraweeh prayers are hurriedly concluded within forty or fifty minutes, while lengthy discussions ensue for hours afterward. This disregard for the sanctity of Quranic recitation not only deprives individuals of blessings but also incurs the Quran's disapproval. Let us strive to avoid such negligence and ensure that our recitation and listening of the Quran during Taraweeh is conducted with diligence, precision, and proper pronunciation. Seeking Forgiveness and

Making Duas

The doors of divine mercy are wide open in Ramadan, making it the ideal time for sincere repentance. The Prophet (PBUH) once ascended the pulpit and responded "Ameen" three times. When asked why, he revealed that Angel Jibreel had invoked destruction upon:

Those who fail to seek forgiveness in Ramadan.

Those who dishonor their parents.

Those who hear the Prophet's name but do not send salutations upon him.

This serves as a stark reminder to seize this month as a period of spiritual cleansing.

Lailat-ul-Qadr: The Night of Power

"Indeed, We sent the Qur'an down during the Night of Decree. And what will make you know what the Night of Decree is? The Night of Decree is better than a thousand months." (Al-Qadr 97:1-3)

Lailat-ul-Qadr, hidden within the last ten nights, offers an unparalleled opportunity for redemption. Yet, it is unfortunate that many treat it as a festival rather than a night of deep worship. The Prophet (PBUH) advised:

"Seek Lailat-ul-Qadr in the last ten nights of Ramadan, especially on the odd nights."

To maximize its blessings: Engage in Qiyam-ul-Lail (Night Prayers).

Recite the supplication: "O Allah, You are the Most Forgiving, and You love to forgive, so forgive me."

Increase in Dhikr (remembrance of Allah).

Ramadan: A Gateway to Knowledge and Faith

Ramadan provides an excellent opportunity to increase one's knowledge of the faith.

While the month is characterized by increased worship and spiritual activities, it is also crucial to prioritize learning the essentials of religion. Acquiring knowledge about Tawheed (belief in the Oneness of Allah), Prophethood, and the Hereafter enhances one's faith and understanding of Islam.

Ramadan: A School of Self-Discipline

"Ramadan is about breaking bad habits, not putting them on pause."

Beyond spiritual rewards, fasting nurtures self-control. The discipline of waking up for Suhoor, enduring hunger, and refraining from negative speech teaches us resilience and mindfulness. It reminds us that true devotion requires sacrifice.

Alama Iqbal profoundly expresses this struggle:

"Kis qadar tum pe giran subah ki bedari hai,

Hum se kab pyaar hai, haan neend tumhein pyaari hai."

Overcoming the challenge of early prayers builds a lifelong habit of devotion. Ramadan instills within us a deeper sense of accountability, urging us to continue our spiritual growth even beyond this sacred month.

Embracing the Spirit of Ramadan

As Ramadan approaches, let us prepare our hearts, not just our kitchens. Let us reflect:

Have we merely observed its rituals, or have we internalized its essence?

Have we sought forgiveness sincerely, or have we let this month slip by unchanged?

Have we strengthened our bond with the Qur'an, or have we let dust gather upon it?

The arrival of Ramadan is a gift—one that not everyone will receive again. Let us seize this divine opportunity to purify our souls, elevate our faith, and strengthen our connection with Allah.

May we be among those who emerge from Ramadan spiritually renewed, carrying its light beyond these thirty days.

Bottom line "O Ramadan, come swiftly, for we eagerly await your luminous crescent."

As this sacred month draws near, may Allah grant us the strength and steadfastness to embrace its blessings fully. May He shower His mercy upon us, guide us towards righteousness, and accept our fasting and prayers.

Ramadan Mubarak! May this month bring you peace, joy, and spiritual enlightenment.

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## In Defense of Child Rights

**SHEIKH SHABIR KULGAMI**

Should we lend a helping hand to people? Many, it is hoped, will answer, yes. So should we not do something unselfish, beautiful and divine to children? We must leave walking a lonely way and looking the other way if we catch sight of a child being abused anywhere – be it a home, street, place of work, institution or playground, etc. Children, our future, are at times abused in aforesaid places, undermining the codal norms against child abuse. At stake is the pleasure of childhood and education opportunities of tens of thousands of children.

These children, child workers, get deprived of the opportunities of education and risk health issues such as skin diseases, diseases of the lungs, weak eyesight, etc. If this is not worrisome for us, then what is? If you notice a child

carrying a spray motor on his/her shoulders across apple orchards, will you be happy? Perhaps not. A person of a sane and sympathetic perspective will be heartbroken on finding trapped a child in exploitative situations, the child labour; so should be a law abiding citizen.

According to Article 23 of the Indian Constitution any type of forced labour is prohibited. Thus, children are required to be protected from the hands of misuse and abuse. Article 24 states that a child under 14 years cannot be employed to perform any hazardous work. Religious books also instruct against child exploitation.

We are literally at the precipice of the child labour catastrophe. Just a casual look around, legions of children shouldering the onus of labour will catch your eye. Child labour peels off the mask of pro-children rhetoric; lofty morals are tossed out of

the window and such children end up as unskilled workers for their remaining life. This brings us to one daunting challenge: school education of a generation is crumbling and doomed in the fog of child labour.

A question: Is education of child workers more important for them or labour-earning money? May be, I sound an old school here. According to a new report by the International Labour Organization (ILO) and UNICEF, the number of children in child labour in the world has gone up to 160 million with millions more at risk due to the impact of COVID-19.

True, it is poverty which forces parents to see their minor children work at the expense of their childhood. Low-income families send their children for work to get a square meal, clear family debts and meet other needs. And high-income families hire

children for a petty amount. So the general public and families of the young laborers turn a blind eye to how harmful child labour is and the impact of the physical and psychological violence which stays forever.

The ILO says that child labour is "work that is mentally, physically, socially or morally dangerous and harmful to children and/or interferes with their schooling by depriving them of the opportunity to attend school, obliging them to leave school prematurely, or requiring them to attempt to combine school attendance with excessively long and heavy work".

In 2011, the ILO adopted the Domestic Workers Convention under which countries are to set a "minimum age for domestic workers consistent with the provisions of the Minimum Age Convention ... and the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention". For

the latter convention "work under particularly difficult conditions such as work for long hours or during the night or work where the child is unreasonably confined to the premises of the employer" is risky.

Though child labour is largely seen as an offence, it seems that we – as one people – are either unwilling or unable to prevent it in its practical forms. Hundreds of minor children can be seen doing manual labor in Dhabas, restaurants, railway stations; working as drivers/conductors and construction workers; pruning apple trees, picking apple fruit, carrying apple boxes and doing other hazardous tasks for – a few rupees.

The 2011 census counted 250103 child labourers in the state of Jammu and Kashmir. If the study on the number of orphans here involved in

menial jobs is not wrong, then 43% of the child population of 26,53,422 i.e., 11,40,971 children are working in J&K which is far more than the figure of 1,75,630 child laborers of census 2001. A report on child labor in J&K finds more than one lakh child laborers here, most of whom work in the handcraft sector, automobile workshops, brick kilns, in agriculture and as domestic servants in homes; thousands of children here are seen working as vendors, bus conductors and auto drivers.

The Union Territory can launch child welfare schemes. Also, it can demonstrate care and make efforts to meet the basic needs of all its citizens and lay the foundation of a dignified life for all – including children. Parents, teachers and preachers can play a key role in preventing child labor; they can take care of a child's health and education.

A key requirement to obtain cooperation against child abuse is awareness. It is an invitation to disillusionment in due course if we accept this offense, child labour. Child rights are essential for a civilized society. Nelson Mandela had said: "Safety and security don't just happen; they are the result of collective consensus and investment."

For combating this rising exploitation–child labour–acknowledging its existence in multiple forms and earnestly working for children's rights is paramount. Only if the authorities, the institutions and society can work together that child labour can be uprooted. Atleast, its occurrence may fall. Creating an environment where children stop working and get enrolled in schools instead, is a must-have move. Childhood should not be a painful stage in one's life.

(Author is a teacher)



## Inordinate delay in nominating MLA's to J&K Legislative Assembly

OMKAR DATTATRAY

As per the recommendations of the delimitation commission four members are to be nominated to the legislative assembly for giving proper representation to certain groups of the people of Jammu and Kashmir. Accordingly two persons from the displaced Kashmiri Pandits that must include one woman from this community and two persons from the POJK refugees should be nominated by the government to legislative assembly to give democratic representation and political rights to these two sections of people. Delimitation commission recommended additional seats in the legislative assembly for Kashmiri Pandits and Displaced persons from POJK. The central government approved these recommendations regarding the nominations of persons from these two sections of the people. Thus the centre government decided that the J&K LG will appoint three persons from Kashmiri Pandit migrants to the legislative assembly necessarily one woman from this section and two persons will be nominated from displaced persons from the POJK to the legislative assembly. The delimitation commission raised the total number of the elected legislative assembly seats to 90 and the five nominated seats will increase the total number of MLAs to 95. The new legislative assembly members were elected on October 8, 2024. Omar Abdullah was sworn as the first chief minister of the Jammu and Kashmir UT on 16th October 2024 and the new assembly came into being after 8th October 2024. But to great dismay the government of JK UT has not still nominated the five MLAs to the new house. J&K's first Assembly session was held on November 4, 2024. However those sections of people who were recommended to be given representation in Legislative Assembly are not nominated up to this time, thus delaying their nomination to the legislative assembly and thus defeating the very purpose of their nomination as recommended by the delimitation commission and approved be the centre government. The budget session of Jammu and Kashmir assembly will commence on 3rd March 2025 and new budget will be unveiled in the assembly on March 7. The five MLA's should have been nominated before the budget session of the assembly so that they could raise their issues and allocations before the government so that funds would be earmarked for the development of these sections of the people. But alas! no nomination from these groups of people has been made, thus defeating the very purpose of their nomination. Section 15, 15 A and 15 B of the J&K Reorganization Act 2019 authorize the LG to nominate five members to the assembly potentially altering the elected body's composition. There five nominated members will have the same powers and position as the other elected MLA's. Supreme Court had earlier declined to consider the plea challenging the authority of the LG to nominate five members to legislative assembly and has asked the petitioners to go to the high Court in this regard. The petition challenging the powers of the LG to nominate members to assembly is sub-judice in the UT's high Court and the hearing on this plea will commence on March 20. It is very unfortunate that the genu-

ine matter of nominating 5 members to the legislative assembly has wrangled in legal battle. It shows that the regional political parties such as NC, PDP and even national party Congress is averse to giving some representation to migrant KP's and displaced persons from POJK and thus they are trying to scuttle the move of nominating 5 members by the LG. The fact of the matter is that NC, PDP, Congress and other like that the 5 members should be nominated by the elected government headed by the chief minister Omar Abdullah. Whatever it is, the sufferers are the migrant KP's who are living as refugees in their own country for last more than three decades and there is no say for them in the legislative assembly and the government. In fact it is within the jurisdiction of the LG to nominate five members to the legislative assembly and there is no wrong in it as per the provisions of the reorganization act 2019 and so the issue should not have been snowballed into a political slugfest and controversy but it has happened and the high court is seized of the matter. The High Court should decide on the petition challenging the authority of the LG to nominate 5 members to the soon so that the groups of people get political rights and they are heard in the assembly and the government. Thus the High Court should decide the plea immediately so that the interests of those sections to be represented by nominated MLA's are not affected. Since the budget of the new government will be tabled in March 2025, and the marginalized sections such as the migrant KP's and displaced refugees from POJK will not be represented and there will be no one to plead their needs and aspirations and the funds to be allocated to these groups of people. The best course in this regards would have been not to politicize the genuine issue of nomination of five members to the LA. It is very disturbing that everything is seen through the prism of mere and cheap politics. The betterment, ensuring political interest and welfare of the migrant KP's and POJK refugees should be above petty politics. It seems that the regional parties such as NC, PDP and others do not like these sections to be given representation and so they are creating impediments in the way of nominating five members. If there is no direction from the honorable high court to the government, the LG should at the earliest opportunity nominate five members from migrant KP's and displaced persons from POJK so that these groups of people will put forward their issues before the legislative assembly and the government in order to give some relief to these sections of the people. Therefore without any delay either high court should decide the matter or in the alternative the LG should use his power under the provisions of the J&K reorganization act 2019 and nominate five members to give fair representation to these sections of people so that they are heard and their issues are solved. No further delay should be made in nominating the members to the legislative assembly otherwise the very purpose of the nomination will be defeated and that would be the doomsday for these sections of the people.

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## The Dual Impact Of Modern Technology On Today's Youth

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We are living in the era of modern technology, where almost every aspect of life is influenced by digital advancements. From smartphones and the internet to artificial intelligence (AI) and social media, technology has transformed the way we live, work, and communicate. The younger generation, particularly Generation Z and Millennials, is the most affected by these changes.

### The Dual Impact of Technology on Society:

Technology was created to make life easier, to gain knowledge about the world, to learn new things, to expand businesses, and to spread social awareness. However, instead of just serving these purposes, technology has taken our lives in a completely different direction.

### Social media and its impact:

One of the biggest examples of this shift is social media. We live in a corrupted world where social media is considered a platform for people to testify to their truth. However, it is increasingly being misused for the wrong purposes. Truth is distorted into lies, and lies are presented as truth. Reality is manipulated in such a way that innocent people are forced to struggle.

All for the sake of money, everything is twisted and reshaped, altering its very existence. This manipulation has engulfed the entire world today, making it difficult to distinguish between what is real and what is fabricated. Instead of being a medium for honesty, social media has become a tool for deception and exploitation.

Many individuals gain fame and recognition without real effort, while others work tirelessly but still fail to achieve success. This imbalance has forced people to look for shortcuts, leading to unethical practices and misguided aspirations.

The influence of social media has also led people to blindly follow influencers, sometimes getting involved in harmful activities. The obsession with unrealistic beauty standards has pushed many to undergo unnecessary plastic surgeries, often damaging their natural selves in pursuit of an artificial ideal. The pressure to look perfect, to fit into certain trends, and to gain validation from others has become a dangerous cycle.

### Use of smartphones:

While technology has undoubtedly brought many benefits, its misuse has created several societal challenges. One of the most concerning aspects is the excessive and unchecked use of smartphones, especially among children. Instead of receiving emotional and moral



guidance from their parents, children are handed smartphones under the guise of education and learning. Without proper supervision, they get exposed to inappropriate content that can severely impact their mental and emotional well-being.

Today, smartphones provide access to vulgar content and explicit material that can corrupt young minds. Children are exposed to adult themes at an early age, leading to premature psychological maturity that they are not equipped to handle. This exposure often results in anxiety, depression, and emotional distress. When children need emotional support from their families, they instead turn to unhealthy coping mechanisms that can destroy their lives.

Without proper guidance, young minds are led astray, engaging in activities such as drug abuse and early sexual involvement. The pursuit of momentary pleasure leads them down dangerous paths, ultimately ruining their futures. Moreover, young girls often fall victim to cyberstalkers who manipulate and exploit them, pushing them into harmful and degrading situations. Such predatory behaviour leads to increased harassment, abuse, and even cases of suicide as victims struggle to escape the emotional and psychological trauma.

The easy access to explicit content, combined with the growing influence of digital addiction, has contributed to the rise of heinous crimes such as rape and sexual violence. The normalization of such content desensitizes individuals, creating a society where respect and morality are compromised. Drug abuse has also become more prevalent, as individuals seek escape from their emotional turmoil through substance dependency.

The uncontrolled use of smartphones is not just a minor issue—it is a growing crisis. Parents and society as a whole must take responsibility for guiding the younger generation. Instead of allowing technology to dictate lives, it should be used responsibly, ensuring that its benefits are maximized while its dangers are minimized. Without proper intervention, the consequences could be catastrophic, leading to a generation lost in the chaos of digital addiction, moral corruption, and psychological dev-

## HT-OPED

this fake era, we should focus on recognizing our true qualities, nurturing our talents, and enhancing our capabilities. Navigating the digital world wisely while preserving our authentic identity is the real success.

### The Influence of Fantasy Worlds on Real-Life Aspirations:

Many fantasy series create scenarios that deeply influence people, drawing them into a world that does not exist. These fictional universes often depict magical powers, supernatural beings, or utopian societies, which captivate audiences and make them momentarily forget the realities of their own lives. While such escapism can be entertaining and even inspiring, it becomes problematic when individuals lose sight of their real goals and immerse themselves too deeply in an illusory world.

The danger lies in the fact that some individuals start prioritizing these fictional worlds over reality. They may detach from their responsibilities, neglect their ambitions, and fail to engage with the real challenges of life. This obsession can hinder personal growth and progress, as they become more invested in an unattainable fantasy rather than striving for real-world achievements.

However, when approached correctly, fantasy can also have a positive impact. It fosters creativity, enhances imagination, and even provides motivation to pursue dreams in the real world. Many great innovations and artistic works have been inspired by fictional concepts. The key is to maintain a balance—enjoying fantasy as a form of entertainment while remaining grounded in reality.

Ultimately, while fantasy worlds can provide an escape, they should never replace the real world. True success and fulfillment come from facing real challenges, setting meaningful goals, and working towards them. Fictional stories should serve as inspiration, not a substitute for real-life aspirations.

### The Impact of Artificial Intelligence on Human Identity and Health:

Human beings are unique creatures, and no one can truly replace them. Each person has their own essence, emotions, and experiences that define their identity. However, we are witnessing a rapidly advancing shift with the rise of artificial intelligence (AI). Robots are now being brought in to perform human tasks, with some even being granted citizenship. Originally, technology like AI and robotics was designed to ease human life by automating repetitive tasks and making processes more efficient. But, with these advancements, an important question arises: Is humanity slowly losing its essence?

The integration of robots and AI into roles traditionally held by humans has led to concerns about identity. Are we, by creating machines that replicate human capabilities, erasing the very qualities that make us human? The idea of building "duplicates" of ourselves through machines could potentially signal a loss of human uniqueness. Is this shift a warning sign that we are drifting further away from what makes us human, losing ourselves in the process of making life easier?

In addition to the existential questions surrounding AI, there has also been a noticeable increase in diseases in recent years. In the past, many of the illnesses we see today were far less prevalent. What has changed? One significant factor could be our over-reliance on technology and convenience. As our lives become more automated and everything—from shopping to work—becomes available with the click of a button, we have become less physically and mentally engaged. Online shopping, food delivery, remote working, and entertainment without effort are all examples of how technology has transformed our daily routines. While these conveniences may seem harmless, they have profound effects on both our mental and physical health.

Mental health, in particular, has been affected by the ease and convenience of modern life. The reliance on technology can lead to feelings of isolation, lack of real-world social interaction, and increased stress due to information overload. Similarly, physical health is suffering as we spend more time sitting in front of screens and less time engaging in physical activities. Obesity, stress, and other lifestyle-related diseases are on the rise, and these issues were not as widespread in earlier times when human life was more active and manual.

As we become more dependent on technology to simplify our lives, we must take a step back and reflect on the consequences. The balance between convenience and health is delicate. The easier we make our lives, the more we risk losing our connection to the physical world and to one another. It's crucial to consider how these advancements are reshaping not only our identity as human beings but also the overall well-being of society.

### Conclusion:

Modern technology has brought both advantages and challenges to today's generation. While it has improved education, communication, and job opportunities, it has also led to addiction, mental health problems, and privacy risks. The key is to use technology wisely—balancing its benefits while minimizing its negative effects.

## You need an environment if you want to develop your communication skills



SAHIL MANZOOR

There are a number of basic things through which we can develop our vocabulary.

It is simple: if we want to become a public speaker, an effective motivator, an educator, or a councillor, we need a gallery of knowledge. Sometimes it works that we have little knowledge by titbits and can make things to some extent, but the thing is that to motivate a gathering or an individual, we need gallery knowledge and must have the basic knowledge about what we are going to deliver.

Today, the competition level is quite high among the learners. Primary school-going students have good communication skills, which

they have developed from their environment, like friends, family, school teachers, etc. Teachers play an important role in developing a number of languages among the learners at the school level. No doubt, mother language plays an immense role in inducing a gallery of knowledge in a very simple and proper way. Complex concepts can be taught in a very simple and effective way in the mother tongue. One thing that must be known to us is that in educational institutes there is a vast diversity of culture; different languages are being spoken by students. So we are giving importance to certain languages like Urdu and English that are commonly understood by an impressive average rate of students.

It takes students almost 6 years to get admission to 1st grade, as per NEP-2020 (national education policy). So the teachers are supposed to admit into first class a student who is 6 years old. During his or her primary schooling, students

spend most of the time playing different games and learning things through play-based methods like learning A to Z, counting, and Urdu letters through rhymes. Rhymes are very important for the students in pre-primary and primary school, as rhymes develop their vocabulary and fluency. Repeating rhyming words or other study material always helps students to a certain extent. Even teachers should keep one day a week for basic things for the students at the secondary and higher secondary levels.

Basic things I mean here to give them different questions from all the subjects, like English, mathematics, science, Urdu, Kashmiri, etc. The test paper should be student-friendly, and conceptual things should be touchable. Students who are clear on the basics are feeling good at their own level. When the basics are not clear, students are baffled and lack interest and confidence as well. For learning, there is no age bar at any level;

we can see what we are lacking and what we need to improve.

If we see the trend today, most people are emphasising communication skills and the English language. No doubt, communication skills are very necessary, and we have to improve with every passing day. At the same time, we have to keep in mind that there are people who are talented, have hold, and are real gems, but unfortunately, they lack hold on English and are weak in communication skills. So for me, we have to give time to those who are real gems in our country and provide them with what they deserve. After that, they will accumulate the basics, like the English language and good communication skills.

This is not fair that at the time of the interview, interviewers are considering communication skills, holding on to language, etc. The country needs dedicated, talented youth for the basic things they will develop later on with each passing day. Such things develop them-

selves; they need an environment where we get such company that they will teach you unintentionally.

How can we improve our communication skills, and we demand the time from us?

For every learner, book reading is vital and can play a great role. Book reading develops our vocabulary and continuously adds new words to our minds. Book reading builds our level of confidence and keeps us updated. So it is up to you; you have to prioritise your demands accordingly. You can register at a public library, where you get books. If we are financially sound, you can create a mini library at home. Selected books can be kept there. Reading books improves your skills and enhances your knowledge. Reading habits develop a number of things for you, like the power of understanding what a sentence explains. We should read a question or any other material a number of times for better understanding.

**Sahilmanzoor0401@gmail.com**



# JKLCU Meets Cabinet Minister Satish Sharma at Civil Secretariat Jammu, Submits Memorandum

**Demands Regularization of services, Provide us salary atleast according to Minimum Wages Act and Pension after retirement.**

■ HT News Network

Jammu, Fri, 28 Feb. – A delegation of the Jammu Kashmir Lamberdars Chowkidars Union (JKLCU), led by its Chairman Mukesh Parihar Sarazi met Cabinet Minister Satish Sharma at the Civil Secretariat, Jammu. The minister holds key portfolios, including Food, Civil Supplies & Consumer Affairs, Transport, Science & Technology, Information Technology, Youth Services & Sports, and ARI & Training.

During the meeting, the union submitted a memorandum demanding the Demands Regularization of

services, Provide us salary atleast according to Minimum Wages Act, Pension after retirement, emphasizing the urgent need for fair wages, social security and better working conditions for Lamberdars and Chowkidars across Jammu & Kashmir. Chairman Mukesh Parihar stressed that despite their increasing responsibilities in rural administration, Lamberdars and Chowkidars continue to receive inadequate wages and lack essential benefits. He urged the government to take immediate steps to ensure financial stability, social protection, and due recognition for this workforce. The



discussion also covered key concerns such as job stability, pension benefits,

and additional welfare measures to improve their standard of living. The union members appealed to the minister for urgent intervention and policy reforms to safeguard their rights. Several union representatives were part of the delegation including Ravi Kumar & Mohd Isaq General Secretary, Anil Kumar Anchal Katoch and collectively reiterated their demand for prompt government action on the issues raised. JKLCU Meets Cabinet Minister Satish Sharma at Civil Secretariat Jammu, Submits Memorandum

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## 38 Women get certificates on completion of Tailoring course conducted by RSETI Ramban

■ HT News Network

RAMBAN, FEBRUARY 28: SBI Rural Self Employment Training Institute (RSETI) Ramban awarded certificates to 38 trainees from two batches of the Women's Tailoring Training Program successfully completed at Ramban. The initiative aims to empower women by equipping them with professional tailoring skills, enabling them to become self-reliant entrepreneurs.

The event was graced by Branch Manager State Bank of India, Sachin Kumar, as the Chief Guest. In his address, he congratulated



the trainees on their achievement and encouraged them to use their newly acquired skills to start their own businesses, become financially independent, and contribute to the local economy.

Presiding over the func-

tion, Director, RSETI S. Harvinder Singh, applauded the efforts of the trainees and emphasized the importance of vocational training in fostering self-employment opportunities. He urged them to take advantage of financial

assistance programs such as PMEGP, Mudra Yojana and HADP to establish their own tailoring businesses.

The program concluded with the signature RSETI Claps, symbolizing encouragement and support for the newly trained women entrepreneurs. The participants expressed their gratitude to SBI RSETI Ramban for providing them with valuable training, promising to utilize their skills effectively for economic growth. The event was graced by Branch Manager State Bank of India, Sachin Kumar, as the Chief Guest. In his address, he congratulated the trainees on their achievement.

## Healthy Baby competition organized at Doda to promote child development

■ HT News Network

DODA, FEBRUARY 28: District Programme Officer ICDS (Poshan), in collaboration with the District Administration Doda, organized a Healthy Baby Competition today at Town Hall Doda, under the IEC initiative, "Healthy Children Make a Healthy Nation."

Deputy Commissioner (DC) Harvinder Singh- the Chief Guest inaugurated the event and inspected stalls set up to raise awareness about child health and nutrition.

The DC emphasized the critical role of Anganwadi workers in shaping the early years of childhood development. He urged them to act as foster mothers, ensuring the physical and mental well-being of the children under their care. He also highlighted the importance of fostering cognitive skills,



including decision-making abilities and presence of mind, to prepare children for a bright future.

As part of the event, certificates were distributed among Anganwadi workers, acknowledging their dedicated service. Additionally, books were distributed to children, encouraging

early learning and development.

The event was attended by the District Programme Officer ICDS Paramjeet Singh, CEO Doda Mohammad Hafiz, EO MC Doda Ravi Parihar, CDPOs, supervisors, Anganwadi workers, helpers, childrens and others.

## KVK Samba organises monthly officers' workshop

■ HT News Network

SAMBA, FEBRUARY 28: Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK) Samba under the aegis of Sher-e-Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology-Jammu (SKUAST-J) organised the monthly officers' workshop here today.

The workshop was attended by a number of extension officers from across the District and organised under the stewardship of Vice Chancellor, Prof. B.N. Tripathi and Director Extension, Prof. Amrishi Vaid of SKUAST-Jammu.

Chief Scientist and Head KVK Prof. Sanjay Khajuria coordinated the workshop. He discussed various field



related issues and stressed on the timely and efficient management of different field problems by the farmers. He also discussed natural farming and stressed on the adoption of cluster approach for the economic development of rural areas. He also spoke on the SHGs/FPOs formation and food processing. He highlighted the formulation and use of biopesticides, biofungicides and biofertilizers

in the organic crops. He added that natural farming can reduce the cost of cultivation and can play a significant role in enhancing the income and employment among the farmers.

Professor Fruit Science SKUAST Jammu Dr. Aakash Sharma discussed the commercial cultivation of fruits and encouraged the farmers to go for the scientific cultivation. He also discussed in detail the organic treatment of various insects-pests in various crops.

Professor, Plant Physiology SKUAST Jammu Dr. Bhav Kumar Sinha spoke on the advance technologies in agricultural/horticultural crops. He stressed on eco-friendly practices so as to produce safe and healthy products.

## GCOE Jammu organizes one-day awareness workshop on "Three New Criminal Laws"

■ HT News Network

JAMMU, FEBRUARY 28: Psychological Counselling Cell of Government College of Education (GCOE), Jammu organized a One-Day Awareness Workshop on "Three New Criminal Laws".

In her opening remarks, the College Principal Dr. Jyoti Parihar, emphasized the significance of such awareness programs in equipping educa-

tors, students, and professionals with updated legal knowledge.

The workshop aimed to provide in-depth knowledge and understanding of the newly enacted criminal laws and their implications on legal proceedings and public administration. The event began with the formal welcome address presented by Dr. Ambica Kumari, Convenor Psychological Counselling Cell and HOD Psychology.

The Resource Person was Farha

Nishat, Dy. SP Headquarters Jammu. She shared valuable insights on law enforcement perspectives regarding the new legal framework. Tehsildar Jammu Paramjeet Singh highlighted the administrative and procedural aspects of the legal reforms. , Sr. PO DPO Nitish Sharma elaborated on the prosecutorial and judicial implications of these legislative changes.

The event concluded with a formal vote of thanks by Dr. Sonam Gandra, HOD ICT.

GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU AND KASHMIR

JAMMU AND KASHMIR SERVICES SELECTION BOARD

CPO Chowk, Panjtirthi, Jammu/ZamZam Complex Rambagh, Srinagar

NOTICE

Subject: Instructions for submission of application forms for the advertised posts.

The J&K Services Selection Board, vide Advertisement Notification No. 02 of 2025 dated 27.02.2025, has advertised 292 posts of Junior Engineer (Electrical) from various corporations of Power Development Department for inviting application from eligible candidates, who are in possession of a valid Domicile Certificate. The aspirants can submit the application forms through the online portal of JKSSB. The following detail are given as under :

Submission of Application Forms	Last Date for receiving Fee Online
08.03.2025 (12:00 AM) to 07.04.2025 (11 :59 PM)	08.03.2025 (12:00 AM) to 07.04.2025 (11 :59 PM)

The necessary instructions for filling up of online applications in this regard are as under:  
1) Candidates are required to apply through online mode only, by accessing the website of JKSSB www.jkssb.nic.in. No other means/mode of application will be accepted.  
2) All the candidates shall be required to register on the Portal by clicking on 'Log-in (Apply on Various Posts) tab available on the Board website.  
3) Candidates are required to have a valid e-mail ID and Mobile Number for registering by clicking on "New User / Sign Up" and creating login credentials. The same shall be validated using OTP (One Time Password) based verification on e-mail and if the verification code is not working, the candidates are required to resend the verification code for account activation by clicking on "Get Activation Code".  
4) Candidates are advised to use their username only generated while registration of their application form or received with the account activation mail instead of their e-mail ID.  
After registering/creating login credentials, the candidates shall complete their OTR (One-Time Registration) form. After the completion of OTR form, the candidates shall click on 'Active Advertisement' tab and then click on 'Apply' tab for submitting the application form for the advertised posts.  
6) The candidates shall carefully fill in all correct information in various columns and click on 'SAVE & CONTINUE'.  
7) A recent and clear passport size Photograph with white background of the candidate shall be uploaded with following specifications:  
> Size of Photograph (Max size-20 KB to 50 KB) (Ht.X Wd=4.5 X 3.5 cms).  
8) A clear Signature of the candidate shall be uploaded with following specifications:> Size of Signature (Max size- 10 KB to 20 KB) (Ht.X Wd=1.5 X 3.5 cms).  
9) A valid Category Certificate shall be uploaded with the following specifications: (Max size- 100KB in pdf format).  
10) The candidate shall ensure that all the required fields are filled up with correct information, before final submission of the application form. Once submitted, the Application Form cannot be edited by the candidates. They shall be personally responsible for filling the details in the online application form and the information/details furnished by the candidates shall be treated as final for the purpose of determining the eligibility/claims of the candidates. No claim on account of wrong/non-filling of information shall be entertained subsequently. Benefits related to category, weightage etc. shall be claimed only in case of possession of a valid, within the date certificate to this effect and no such claim shall be entertained at any subsequent stage.  
11) Candidate's Application will not be considered if fee is not paid for that application. Fees shall be paid only by Net banking/ Debit Card/UPI/Credit Card Options:  
After successful completion of the form, the candidates shall be shown "Pay Now" link for making the online application fee payment. Candidates are advised to check the status of the fee as 'Submitted' on their dashboard. The options will be available after clicking on Pay Now link. Candidate can pay using Net banking, Debit Card, UPI, Credit Card, as Online Payment options.  
In case of "Payment Failure/Pending", candidates are advised to immediately contact their respective banks well before the cut-off date.  
12) No hard copy or print out of the application form is required to be submitted by the candidates, except at the stage of DV, only in respect of the shortlisted candidates, after the conclusion of the examination

DIPK-12497/24  
Date: Feb 28, 2025

Sd/  
(Atul kumar) JKAS  
Secretary JK SERVICES SELECTION BOARD

GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU & KASHMIR

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

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

PUBLIC NOTICE

The Registrar Births and Deaths (Block Development Officer Wagoora)/chokedar has submitted case file pertaining to Birth FATIMA JAVID D/O JAVID AHMAD SOFI R/O MIRANGUND Tehsil BARAMULLA Distt. Baramulla having verified the date of Birth as 23/06/2022 and event has been shown to be occurred at SDH kreeri for issuance of delay order .In this connection . if anyone have any objection to the issuance of delay order of Birth certificate shall present his/her claim this office within 07 days, after that no objection shall be entertained.

Executive Magistrate  
1st Class KREERI

GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU & KASHMIR

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

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

PUBLIC NOTICE

The Registrar Births and Deaths (Block Development Officer Wagoora)/chokedar has submitted case file pertaining to Birth MOHAMMAD ANEES DAR S/O WASEEM AHMAD DAR R/O DEVDRANGEN Tehsil TANGMARAG Distt. Baramulla having verified the date of Birth as 29/08/2022 and event has been shown to be occurred at SDH kreeri for issuance of delay order .In this connection . if anyone have any objection to the issuance of delay order of Birth certificate shall present his/her claim this office within 07 days, after that no objection shall be entertained.

Executive Magistrate  
1st Class KREERI



# Legal awareness program held for children held at Ganderbal

■ HT News Network

GANDERBAL, FEBRUARY 28: Legal Services Unit for Children (LSUC), Ganderbal, under the aegis of the District Legal Services Authority (DLSA) Ganderbal, organized a legal awareness program for children at Town Hall Ganderbal, today.

The event was conducted in collaboration with the Social Welfare Department Ganderbal, Child Welfare Committee Ganderbal and the District Child Protection Office Ganderbal.

The program, held under the supervision of Abdul Nasir, Chairman DLSA Ganderbal aimed to educate children, including those with disabilities, transgender children, and children rescued from trafficking, child marriage, child abuse, and denial of edu-

cation, about their legal rights and protections.

The initiative also sought to promote social inclusion among vulnerable children affected by sexual abuse, trafficking, HIV/AIDS, child marriage, and other forms of exploitation.

On the occasion, Shubana, Chairperson, Child Welfare Committee (CWC) Ganderbal, emphasized that the primary objective of the program is to raise awareness among the general public, particularly children, about their rights and protections. She underscored the importance of educating children about the mechanisms for their protection from abuse and exploitation.

She provided valuable insights on how to identify and report cases of child abuse, emphasizing the critical role of the community in preventing



and responding to child abuse. She also highlighted the procedures for reporting suspected cases of child

abuse and the support services available to victims.

Advocate Sajid Irfan, Deputy Legal

Aid Defense Counsel (Member, LSUC) Ganderbal, delivered an informative session on the various laws related to children. He comprehensively highlighted the rights of children in protecting and promoting their welfare.

He also threw light on key legislation, including the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015, the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, 2012, and the Right to Education Act, 2009. He explained the provisions and safeguards enshrined in these laws, which aim to ensure the care, protection, and development of children.

Advocate Burjeena Hamid, Member, Legal Services Unit for Children (LSUC) Ganderbal, delivered a comprehensive presentation on child rights and child abuse.

Shahbaz Hamid, from District Child

Protection Officer (DCPU), Ganderbal, highlighted the crucial role of the Child Help Line in providing assistance to children in need of care and protection.

The program was attended by members of Legal Services Unit for Children (LSUC) Ganderbal, officials of Social Welfare Department, Ganderbal, Child Welfare Committee, Ganderbal, District Child Protection Office, Ganderbal, PAALASH Kangan, PAREESHA Ganderbal and children from PAALASH Kangan, PAREESHA Ganderbal and other participants. She provided valuable insights on how to identify and report cases of child abuse, emphasizing the critical role of the community in preventing and responding to child abuse. She also highlighted the procedures for reporting suspected cases of child.

## BBBP, NMBA Action Plans discussed, finalised for implementation at Shopian

DC calls for conducting collaborative, extensive mega awareness campaigns

■ HT News Network

SHOPIAN, FEBRUARY 28: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Shopian, Shishar Gupta today chaired a meeting of concerned officers for effective implementation of Beti Bachao Beti Padhao (BBBP) and Nasha Mukhta Bharat Abhiyaan (NMBA) in the district during the ongoing year year.

Nodal Officer, DSWO Shopian on the occasion apprised about the calendar of IEC activities with diverse range of activities and put forth the same for implementation.

DC sought effective and result oriented action from stakeholders on both these themes and instructed for conduct of collaborative and extensive mega awareness campaigns across the district.

He also directed weekly reports of Drug Control inspection of pharmacies while directing for enhanced inspections of pharmacies across the



district. Collaborative, extensive awareness campaigns by Education, Social Welfare, Health, NRLM and DLSA and others were emphasized for better results in terms of awareness and impact.

The meeting was attended by ADC,

Dr. Zakir Hussain Faaz; ACR, CEO, CMO, DIO, STO, DSWO, CDPO, DYSSO, Drug Control Officer, DPM, NRLM, Co-ordinator SHEW, Representative of DLSA among other concerned. The meeting was attended by ADC, Dr. Zakir Hussain Faaz.

## Meeting to review Price Control & Quality Checking held at Bandipora

■ HT News Network

BANDIPORA, FEBRUARY 28: On the directions of Deputy Commissioner Bandipora, Manzoor Ahmad Qadri, the Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC) Bandipora, Zaffar Husson Shawl, on Friday chaired a meeting to review measures for price control and quality checking in the district.

The meeting aimed to ensure availability of essential commodities, maintaining quality standards, and preventing adulteration of essentials in the market, with a particular focus on the month of Ramadan.

The ADC emphasized the importance of effective coordination among various departments to address these concerns and ensure



that the public has access to essentials, food items at reasonable prices.

He stressed the need to maintain high-quality standards and prevent price hikes during the month of Ramadan.

On the occasion market checking teams were also constituted comprising

representatives from the Revenue Department, Food Safety, Legal Metrology, FCS&CA, and the Police.

The ADC directed the concerned to ensure regular market checking besides assured that strict monitoring and vigilant checks will be conducted to prevent exploitation of

consumers.

The meeting was attended by Sub-Divisional Magistrate Sumbal, Assistant Commissioner Development, Chief Medical Officer (CMO), Tehsildars and representatives from the Legal Metrology, Food Safety, and FCS&CA departments.

SDM Sumbal and Tehsildars from Sumbal subdivision also attended the meeting through virtual mode. The ADC emphasized the importance of effective coordination among various departments to address these concerns and ensure that the public has access to essentials, food items at reasonable prices.

He stressed the need to maintain high-quality standards and prevent price hikes during the month of Ramadan.

## RPHQ Baramulla hosts thrilling skiing competition at Gulmarg

■ HT News Network

BARAMULLA, FEBRUARY 28: To promote sportsmanship, community engagement, and healthy activities among the youth, Range Police Headquarters Baramulla successfully organized a one-day skiing competition at Gulmarg, attracting nearly 50 enthusiastic participants from all districts of North Kashmir. The competition witnessed enthusiastic participation from students and locals, who showcased their skiing skills on the slopes of Gulmarg. The event was a wonderful example of how the community comes together to celebrate not just sports but the spirit of unity, resilience, and collaboration. The event was attended by distinguished guests including Chief Guest DIG North Kashmir Range Shri Maqsood Ul Zaman-IPS, SSP Baramulla Shri Gurinder Pal Singh-IPS, officers of Gulmarg development authority, Tourism department and Youth Services & sports etc. Speaking on the occasion, DIG North Kashmir Shri Maqsood Ul Zaman-IPS extended warmest welcome to the honourable guests, participants, supporters, volunteers, and spectators. He emphasized the importance of community engagement, sportsmanship, and healthy activities, stating that such events help build trust and collaboration between police and the public. RPHQ Baramulla pledged to continue organizing such events throughout the year, including cricket, football, and volleyball tournaments. The event concluded with the distribution of prizes among the winners and a vote of thanks to the organizing team, participants, and supporting staff.

## Police busts sheep theft gang in Shopian, recovers stolen livestock

■ HT News Network

FEBRUARY 28: Police in Shopian cracked multiple sheep theft cases bringing relief to affected families and recovered stolen live stock. The residents of Heegund Batpora, Ayend Rawalpura and Ramnagar had reported theft incidents involving dozens of stolen sheep causing panic in the area. Consequently, FIR No. 03/2025 at PS Heerpura and FIR Nos. 21/2025, 23/2025, and 31/2025 at PS Shopian were registered and investigations were initiated. To expedite the investigation and recover the stolen livestock, a Special Investigation Team (SIT) was constituted by SSP Shopian comprising officers from PS Shopian and PS Heerpura under the supervision of DySP Hqrs Shopian. The team questioned multiple suspects and analysed CCTV footage from various routes eventually identifying and apprehending the culprits besides making recovery of dozens of stolen sheep. The arrested individual have been identified as Tariq Ahmad Dar son of Gh Hassan resident of Raiwatan Aasnoor, Kulgam, Nissar Ahmad Malla son of Gh Rasool Malla resident of Wazir Check, Imam Sahib, Shopian.

## MLA Bandipora Calls for Prioritizing Public Welfare and Ensuring Uninterrupted Essential Services

■ HT News Network

BANDIPORA, FEBRUARY 28: MLA Bandipora, Nizamuddin Bhat has urged authorities to prioritize public welfare and ensure the efficient management of essential services, particularly uninterrupted electricity and water supply. Emphasizing accountability and transparency in governance, he stressed that the public must receive the services they rightfully deserve without unnecessary delays or bureaucratic hurdles.

Bhat spoke to the Chief Engineer of PDD and requested that electricity connections of poor households not be disconnected during the holy month of Ramzan. He highlighted the



struggles of poor laborers during winter, noting that many face difficulties in paying their electricity bills due to a lack of work. To provide relief, at least for this month, he suggested allowing easy installment-based payments for defaulters. Additionally, he made a special appeal for Chuntawari, Benilipora Aloosa stressing the urgent need for power restoration in the area,

which has been experiencing outages for several days. To address the issue, he directed the Executive Engineer of PDD Bandipora to ensure the immediate restoration of electricity, particularly in view of the holy month. Furthermore, MLA Bandipora condemned the politicization of welfare and essential services. He urged officers to serve the people with sincerity rather than misleading them and reminded them of their duty to address public grievances with dedication. He called for a governance approach that prioritizes public concerns over political interests, ensuring that essential services remain accessible to all, especially during the holy month of Ramzan.

## ACS Education inspects exam centres of class XI in Srinagar, appreciates arrangements

■ HT News Network

SRINAGAR, FEBRUARY 28: Additional Chief Secretary (ACS), Education, Shantmanu, today visited different schools in Srinagar district and inspected several examination centres of class XI and reviewed the facilities being provided to the students there.

During the inspection, the Additional Chief Secretary was accompanied by Director School Education, Kashmir, Dr. G N Itoo, who briefed him about the arrangements made by the department in connection with the ongoing examinations for class XI.

While inspecting the examination centre at Girls Higher Secondary School Kothibagh, the ACS interacted with the students and enquired about the examination



papers and other facilities being provided to them.

The Additional Chief Secretary expressed satisfaction over the arrangements made by the School Education Department at the examination centres. He directed all the school heads to make adequate heating arrangements in the examination halls in view of the inclement weather in the region.

## Financial Commissioner visited IUST

■ HT News Network

AWANTIPORA, Feb. 28: A special interaction program was held at the Islamic University of Science and Technology (IUST), Shri Shantmanu (IAS), Financial Commissioner (Addl. Chief Secretary) Higher Education Department, UT of Jammu and Kashmir, as the Chief Guest. Prof. Sheikh Ajaz Bashir, Director, UT of Jammu and Kashmir, was also present.

The program was attended by university officials, including Registrar, Dean Academic Affairs, Dean Research, Finance Officer, Controller of Examinations, all Deans of Schools, Dean of Students, Dean Outreach, Director CIED, Director IT&SS, Director DIQA, and various Heads of Departments. The delegates toured IUST's state-of-the-art labs and facilities, gaining first-hand insight into the infrastructure supporting the university's academic and



research endeavours.

Addressing the gathering, Shri Shantmanu emphasized the need for education that not only prepares students for the future but also fosters a sense of giving

back to society. He expressed satisfaction with IUST's remarkable progress and assured his continued support for the university's future growth and initiatives. Prof. Shakil Ahmad Romshoo, Vice

Chancellor of IUST, highlighted the university's research and academic achievements. He elaborated on the institution's pioneering initiatives aligned with the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, focusing on skill enhancement programs, innovation, entrepreneurship, and multidisciplinary education. He also introduced the 'One University One Data' initiative aimed at enhancing data management and institutional efficiency. The event concluded with a vote of thanks proposed by Dr. Asifa Baba, Dean of Students. The session was skillfully moderated by Dr. Farhana Alia. Addressing the gathering, Shri Shantmanu emphasized the need for education that not only prepares students for the future but also fosters a sense of giving back to society. He expressed satisfaction with IUST's remarkable progress and assured his continued support for the university's future growth and initiatives.



## Javed Rana holds public outreach camp; assures time bound redressal of public grievances

■ HT News Network

MENDHAR, (POONCH) FEBRUARY 28: Minister for Jal Shakti, Forest, Ecology & Environment and Tribal Affairs, Javed Ahmed Rana, today conducted a mega public outreach camp at Mendhar, where a large number of delegations and individuals apprised him of their issues and concerns. During the camp, aimed at assessing the development scenario of the area, the Minister listened to the concerns raised by the locals regarding water supply, healthcare services, implementation of Forest Rights Act, PMAY-G and Tribal welfare among others. Additionally, the delegations highlighted demands for improved road connectivity and Eklavya Model Residential Schools as well as other developmental needs.

The Minister assured the delegations that all their issues would be addressed in a time bound manner, emphasising the government's focus on delivering services at the people's



doorsteps. "We are deeply dedicated to deliver effective governance while ensuring that public grievances are addressed on priority," asserted the Minister. Rana highlighted several key initiatives being taken by the government, including measures to provide safe drinking water to every household, implementation of Forest Rights Act, resolving issues of tribals, improved healthcare and better road connectivity among others. He also underscored the importance of

engaging with the grassroots to identify and resolve problems effectively.

During the outreach program, the Minister issued specific directions to the line departments for swift action on critical issues, including timely preparation of Detailed Project Reports (DPRs) for enhanced execution of works. He also asked the Irrigation, Flood Control and Forest Departments to prioritise water and soil conservation, emphasising the importance of rainwater harvesting.

## DC B'pora chairs DCC/ DLRC meeting for Quarter ending December

■ HT News Network

BANDIPORA, FEBRUARY 28: The Deputy Commissioner (DC) Bandipora, Manzoor Ahmad Qadri today chaired District Consultative Committee (DCC)/ District Level Review Committee (DLRC) meeting for the December quarter of FY 2024-25 at the Conference Hall of Mini Secretariat, Bandipora.

LDM Bandipora, Shameem Ahmad Haji briefed the chair regarding the performance of banks in both priority and non-priority sectors, as well as the progress of various beneficiary-oriented social security schemes.

During the meeting, the DC urged all stakeholders to work on addressing the



challenges and bottlenecks affecting the performance of banks in the district. He also emphasized the importance of improving coordination between line departments and banks to address these issues.

During the meeting, it was informed that the District has achieved 46% of ACP (FY 24-25) in three

quarters by disbursing an amount of Rs 779.10 crores against the target of 1691.29 crores, with both sectors priority and non-priority contributing equally with priority sector showing achievement of Rs 394 crores and non-priority sector recording achievement of 385 crores.

On the occasion, the DC

directed all the banks to ensure achievement of 100% against the allocated target by March end. He further urged the banks and departments to improve the credit in all 29 schemes under HADP scheme.

Qadri further directed all banks and departments to vigorously participate in Jan Suraksha campaign for mobilizing more applications under social security schemes with the help of all resources available for 100% achievement.

Speaking on the occasion, ADDC urged for 100% coverage of active KCC for issuance of KCC smart cards, and all banks were directed to report the progress and make strategy for its saturation.

## DC reviews implementation of RDD Sector schemes in Kishtwar District

■ HT News Network

KISHTWAR, FEBRUARY 28: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Kishtwar, Rajesh Kumar Shavan on Friday convened a crucial meeting with officers from the Department of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj to review the implementation of various flagship schemes, including the Aspirational Block Development Program (ABDP), Aspirational Panchayat Development Program (APDP), MGN-REGA, PMAY-G, SBM-G, Awaas Plus Survey, and other key initiatives.

At the outset of the meeting, Assistant Commissioner Development Phulail Singh gave a detailed presentation on the development schemes, including physical and financial progress achieved at the block level.

The meeting also covered the procurement status of essential items by Block Development Officers (BDOs), including water coolers, PA systems, tents, canopies and other items under the Area Development Plan.

Further, the DC reviewed the recovery



status of PMAY defaulters and instructed Tehsildars to take stringent actions against the defaulters. "All PMAY defaulters be summoned and required to start construction of houses within the next 15 days, with legal action to follow in case of non-compliance" the DC stressed and advised for close monitoring of geotagging of the houses to ensure accurate tracking and progress.

A committee comprising CPO, members of the designated cell and a Village Level Committee (comprising 20 local persons) were constituted to oversee the verification of parallel works, completion of tasks and other essential activities.

## MLA Anantnag West lays foundation stone for Bridge over Nallah Sandran at Damjan

■ HT News Network

ANANTNAG, FEBRUARY 28: Member of Legislative Assembly (MLA) Anantnag West, Advocate Abdul Majeed Bhat today laid the foundation stone for a new 3x30-meter, two-lane truss girder bridge over Nallah Sandran at Damjan, Anantnag in order to boost local connectivity.

Chief Engineer R&B South Kashmir, SE R&B South Kashmir, officers and officials from various departments and local residents were present on the occasion.

Highlighting the significance of the project for the region, the MLA stated that the new bridge, once completed, will provide much-needed relief to the local population by improving transportation access, easing traffic congestion, and reducing travel time.

He added that the project is part



of the government's ongoing efforts to strengthen the region's infrastructure and ensure better connectivity for remote areas to key urban centers. The bridge will serve as a vital link, particularly during inclement weather, providing an all-weather route for people and goods.

The bridge will bring economic

benefits, boost local trade and make commuting easier for everyone, he further said. The bridge, expected to be completed in two years, is funded under NABARD, with an estimated cost of Rs. 1063.04 lakh. It will be designed to withstand harsh weather conditions and accommodate the region's growing traffic needs.

Residents of the area expressed enthusiasm for the new project, noting that it will not only improve transportation but also contribute to the socio-economic development of the region.

The bridge is expected to benefit a large number of households, particularly those in the more remote areas of Anantnag West, by providing safer and quicker access to medical, educational, and commercial facilities. Chief Engineer R&B South Kashmir, SE R&B South Kashmir, officers and officials from various departments and local residents were present on the occasion. Highlighting the significance of the project for the region, the MLA stated that the new bridge, once completed, will provide much-needed relief to the local population by improving transportation access, easing traffic congestion, and reducing travel time.

## NCORD meeting discusses drug control measures in Reasi DM calls for targeting hot spots, perpetrators

■ HT News Network

REASI, FEBRUARY 28: District Magistrate Nidhi Malik today chaired the monthly meeting of the District level Committee under Narco Coordination Centre (NCORD) to assess and strengthen Drug control measures in the region.

Taking a thorough review of enforcement measures, the DM directed local police to identify hot spots where drug peddlers and addicts are active. She emphasized the need to adopt a targeted approach to ensure effective enforcement in these areas.

Stressing on community awareness, she called for launching



extensive campaigns in educational institutions to educate youth about the dangers of drug addiction. The DM directed SDMs to conduct Panchayat level campaigns under the supervision of local Tehsildars, CDPOs and BDOs

with active community participation and inputs from intellectuals and religious leaders.

The Police administration was asked to collaborate with the drug control department to conduct regular checking of pharmacies to

enforce compliance with government regulations. She also directed authorities to establish channels to identify and destroy illicit poppy cultivation, followed by strict legal action against those involved in such activities. The Chief Medical Officer (CMO) was asked to monitor the follow-up care of persons treated for drug de-addiction, ensuring their proper rehabilitation and continued support. She concluded by reaffirming the district administration's commitment to fighting the drug crisis in "full mission mode," with a coordinated approach involving law enforcement, medical professionals, community leaders and educational institutions.

## DC Reasi reviews arrangements for holy month of Ram

■ HT News Network

REASI, FEBRUARY 28: Deputy Commissioner Nidhi Malik convened a meeting of officers to review and finalize the arrangements for the ensuing holy month of Ramzan. The DC instructed officers of JPDCL and Jal Shakti to ensure uninterrupted power and water supply, especially during Sehri and Iftar times.

Emphasizing on the sanitation of towns and municipality areas, the DC directed Executive Officers of Municipal Committees to launch special cleanliness drives in the district with focus on roads, lanes, drains and regular lifting of waste from markets. The CMO was directed to ensure the availability of medical staff and medicines to cater to medical emergencies. She directed fire departments to ensure

proper arrangements to deal with any untoward incident. The Food safety officials were asked to conduct regular market inspections to check food quality in the market during the month. She also directed for installation of more lights in their respective towns. Enforcement squads were constituted to keep check on profiteering, hoarding and overcharging by shopkeepers by conducting market checking on regular intervals. Availability of essentials in the market was also reviewed during the meeting, while traffic authorities were directed to ensure availability of transport in evening hours. Among others, the meeting was attended by ADC Rakesh Kumar, SDMs, Dy. SP HQ, ARTO, Tehsildar Reasi, Tehsildar Bhomag, Executive Engineer JPDCL, EO's officials from Sheep Husbandry and Fire departments, Mufti Ashraf Misbahi.

## Omar Govt committed for youth empowerment, economic revival: Sadhotra Lawmakers should play positive role in impending Assembly Session: Rattan Lal Gupta

■ HT News Network

Jammu, February 28: Mr Ajay Kumar Sadhotra former minister and Additional General Secretary JKNC said in his address, stating that the Central Government has consistently failed to address the concerns of J&K's youth. He pointed out that hollow policies and lack of employment opportunities over the last decade have severely impacted the future of young people in the region.

Ajay Kumar Sadhotra further added that the present government, under the leadership of Chief Minister Omar Abdullah, is committed to reversing this trend by implementing policies that will generate employment and boost economic growth. He called upon the newly inducted

members to work with dedication and spread the party's vision among the masses. He reaffirmed the commitment of party leadership to fighting for the rights of the people and ensuring holistic development in Jammu and Kashmir.

The senior NC leader was speaking during a joining programme held at Sher-e-Kashmir Bhawan, Jammu. The joining programme was organized under the leadership of Tejinder Pal Singh Aman, Provincial President Jammu Province YNC in which several enthusiastic youth joined the party fold.

Speaking on the occasion, Rattan Lal Gupta Provincial President Jammu Province JKNC stressed that the upcoming session is an opportunity for lawmakers to raise pressing public issues, including unemployment,



economic distress, plight of farmers, existing industries, etc. He urged all political parties to focus on policy-driven debates for the benefit and wellbeing of the people as the upcoming session of the Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly, convening after

a period of seven years, holds immense significance for the people of Jammu and Kashmir, who have high expectations from their elected representatives.

Rattan Lal Gupta further assured that the National Conference govern-

ment, under the leadership of Chief Minister Omar Abdullah, is committed to presenting a people-friendly budget that will directly address the concerns of the youth, unemployed population, farmers, industrial sector, focusing to health and education sectors and would cover all sections of the society as well as business community. He reiterated that the National Conference has always worked for the welfare of the people and will continue to prioritize their needs.

Welcoming the new entrants, Sardar Tejinder Singh Aman Provincial President Jammu Province YNC urged them to work diligently for strengthening the Party's base at the grassroots level. He highlighted that youth play a crucial role in shaping the future of J&K and must be active

participants in the democratic process.

Among those who joined the party fold namely: Ravi Kumar social worker and President of Matador Union Ramnagar, Abdul Razaq Bhanday and Irshad Ahmad, Youth leaders of Ramnagar.

Those who were present on the occasion included: Ayub Malik Provincial Secretary Jammu, Jugal Mahajan Treasurer, Th. Yashu Vardhan Singh Additional Spokesperson Jammu, Rakesh Singh Raka Vice President Central Zone, S. Gurnam Singh Block President Jammu West, Akash Kharka District President Udhampur Rural YNC, Mohinder Kumar Rana Joint Secretary Central Zone, Jaseen Malik, Nitish Gowsami, Mudit Seth, Sunil Sharma, Uttam Singh and others.



# DC Samba leads anti-drug IEC Campaign at Naran Panchayat

■ HT News Network

SAMBA, FEBRUARY 28: A significant outreach program was conducted today here at Naran Panchayat under the ongoing anti-drug IEC campaign.

Deputy Commissioner Rajesh Sharma led the event. The local community actively engaged in discussions on drug prevention, rehabilitation and the collective responsibility of society in tackling substance abuse. The DC underlined the significance of organizing awareness programs in schools and local institutions in promotion of the campaign, directing Education officials to integrate drug prevention initiatives into school curricula and conduct regular sensitization sessions. He also urged teachers and parents to stay vigilant, identify early warning signs and promote open communication with children. Medical and healthcare representa-



tives highlighted the physical and psychological impact of drug addiction, emphasizing the need for early intervention, routine health check-ups and counseling facilities. DC Samba instructed medical teams to organize regular awareness drives in schools and public spaces to help in early detection and prevention.

He emphasized the need for a united and proactive approach to combat drug abuse, highlighting the role of education, healthcare and community participation in addressing this challenge.

The event witnessed the participation of SDM Ghagwal Sunaina Saini along with Tehsildar Ghagwal, BDO Ghagwal, public representatives and officials from the medical and education sectors.

The program concluded with emphasis on a coordinated approach between administration, law enforcement and civil society to make Samba a drug-free district.

## Traffic Police Rural issue advisory in view of bad weather

■ HT News Network

JAMMU, FEBRUARY 28: In view of prevailing bad weather conditions, the Traffic Police Rural have advised commuters to take precautions while driving as continuous raining and snowfall has led to slippery roads, land/ mudslides, blockade of roads at multiple locations.

"The general public is suggested and advised to follow these guidelines to ensure your safety; Slow down the vehicle speed to match the road conditions and use heavy gear while driving uphill and downhill; Switch to a low beam to reduce glare from rain and fog; Increase your vehicle distance while in traffic alignment on the road during bad weather conditions; Avoid sudden acceleration as it can lead to loss of control or skidding; Be aware of vulnerable road users and give them plenty of space; If you can't see the road surface, it's not safe to drive through; Ensure your vehicle's tyres, brakes and windshield wipers are in good working order; Avoid driving through flooded /muddy/hilly areas and keep a safe distance from Pedestrians and cyclists; Take extreme care while driving on the under construction NHWs and other roads. Avoid snowbound hilly areas. Include items like a flashlight, first aid kit, and snacks in case you become stranded. People have been further advised to undertake journey only after confirming the status of the road from Traffic control units with Helpline numbers ; Traffic Police Control Room Jammu:- (0191-2459048,0191-2740550, 9419147732,103).

## Polytechnic Jammu organises seminar on PM Internship Scheme Pilot Project – 2.0

■ HT News Network

JAMMU, FEBRUARY 28: The Prime Minister Internship Scheme (PMIS) IEC outreach Seminar was organised today here in the Auditorium Hall of Government Polytechnic College Bikram Chowk, in coordination with the Directorate of Skill Development J&K. The primary objective of this initiative is to spread awareness about the scheme among the youth of the region.

The event was represented by Registrar of Companies Rajneesh Kumar, who highlighted the key features of the PMIS. He shared the outcomes and success stories from Round 1 and encouraged youth between the ages of 20 to 24 to actively participate in this valuable initiative, which aims to provide exposure and hands-on experience in various sectors.

Additionally, Raj Kumar Koul from the Ministry of Corporate Affairs delivered an informative session on the step-by-step process for registering on the PMIS portal. He also demonstrated how to update profiles and



ensure a smooth application process for interested candidates.

The session concluded with an address from the Er. Talet Mahmood Principal Government Polytechnic College Bikram Chowk Jammu, who emphasized the importance of the scheme tailored specifically for the youth. He urged students and young professionals to seize the opportunity and benefit from the scheme, which offers valuable skill development and career advancement prospects.

The Prime Minister Internship Scheme provides a unique platform for the youth to gain practical expo-

sure and enhance their professional skills. It is an excellent opportunity for young individuals to contribute to national development while simultaneously building their career profiles.

Others were present on the event were HODs, staff, and students of Government Polytechnic Jammu, Government Polytechnic for Women Jammu, Government Industrial Training Institute Jammu and Government Women ITI Jammu.

For more information and registration details, interested individuals can visit the official PMIS portal. Contact: [9911873463]

## GCW Parade hosts guest lecture to mark National Science Day

■ HT News Network

JAMMU, FEBRUARY 28: The Science Club of Government College for Women Parade Ground today celebrated the National Science Day by organizing a guest Lecture and Seminar themed 'Empowering Indian Youth for Global Leadership in Science and Technology for Viksit Bharat.'

The lecture was delivered by Deputy Secretary JKSSB Pooja Rasgotra, while students across all major streams competed in Seminar. The event commenced with the welcome address by Associate Professor of Chemistry and Convener, Science Club Prof. Anjali Abrol.

The Principal enlightened the students about the indispensability of science and technology in the present world scenario. He also praised the Science Club for celebrating the National Science Day successfully.

The resource person, Pooja Rasgotra presented her views on the significance of science in the establishment of a student's career in any field. She shared her journey towards clearing the JKAS examination with Science subjects and encouraged the students to take science as major subjects.

The seminar was judged by Dr Ritu Magotra, Head of English Department and Pooja Rasgotra, the resource person of the event. The trophies were presented to the winners in the valedictory segment of the event. The event was also attended by Dr Surinder Singh Parihar (Convener IQAC), Dr. Shally Chadha (Associate Professor, Department of Chemistry), Dr Rajesh Kant (Head, Department of Chemistry), Dr Sarita Parihar (Assistant Professor, Department of Physics), Dr Manjulla Gupta (Assistant Professor, Department of Chemistry), Dr Sushma Gupta (Assistant Professor, Department of Chemistry), Dr Bhawandeep Kour (Assistant Professor, Department of Zoology) and Dr Atiya Syed (Assistant Professor, Department of Chemistry). Dr Neha Gupta (Assistant Professor, Department of Environmental Sciences) presented the vote of thanks.

## GDC Marh organises Interdisciplinary Quiz Competition

■ HT News Network

JAMMU, FEBRUARY 28: To foster scientific temperament, creativity and innovation among students, Government Degree College Marh Science club, in collaboration with IIC and IQAC, organized Inter-Discipline quiz competition to mark National Science Day celebrating this year's theme "Empowering Indian Youth for Global Leadership in Science and Innovation for VIKSIT BHARAT."

Principal Prof (Dr) Rakesh Kumar Koul emphasised the importance of science and technology in shaping the future. He appraised the students that the aim of this competition is not about winning and losing but learning and enhancing their scientific temperament. The competition featured basic concepts from Bio-Sciences, Physics, Chemistry, Geography, Mathematics, Environmental Sciences, Computer Sciences, Current affairs & Science and Technology, allowing students to showcase their knowledge, social responsibility and problem-solving skills. As many as 12 students, divided in 4 teams, participate in the four round quiz competition.

In the valedictory session, prizes (mementos and certificates) were given away to the winning teams and the participants. First prize was won by team D, Mercury (Kunal, Sanjay, and Suresh), while Team B Venus (Diksha, Shilpa, Abhishek) won second prize and Team C Earth (Mohit, Geetanjali and Shivansh) won the third prize. IQAC convener, Prof. Imtiaz Shahid made all the requisite preparations for ensuring a flawless execution of the competition. Dr. Balwinder Saini (HOD Chemistry) conducted the proceedings of the programme.

## Training workshop on Snakebite Envenoming Prevention concludes at Jammu

■ HT News Network

JAMMU, FEBRUARY 28: District Health Society (DHS) Jammu under the supportive supervision of Chief Medical Officer Jammu (Vice-Chairman) Dr. Harbaksh Singh today concluded two day training session for Medical Officers and paramedical staff on National Snakebite Envenoming Prevention & Control Programme (SBPC).

District Jammu is the first District in UT of J&K to organize the Training of Medical Officers and paramedical staff on Snakebite Envenoming Management and Prevention and Control.

The training focused on reducing deaths and disabilities due to Snake Bite before 2030. It consisted of technical sessions, case studies, and hands-on exercises to enhance skills of the Medical Officers & paramedical staff in disease surveillance and management. Resource Persons were Dr. Shehnaz Choudhary (Medical Officer Epidemiology) and Dr. Isha Kohli (District Program Manager, NHM and District Nodal Officer SBPC). CMO Dr. Harbaksh Singh highlighted the role of Peripheral Health staff in timely management of Snake bite cases to prevent the occurrence of deaths and reduce disability. He stressed that timely management of Snake Bites can prevent death & disability. He also emphasised that a strong inter-sectoral approach is essential in Snake Bite Envenoming Management. He also discussed the ground level challenges faced by Health workers in implementation of this programme.

# JKAACL, Sahitya Akademi organise 'Sahitya Manch' Celebrating Dogri Poetry

■ HT News Network

JAMMU, FEBRUARY 28: Jammu & Kashmir Academy of Art, Culture, and Languages, in collaboration with Sahitya Akademi New Delhi, organized a captivating literary event titled 'Sahitya Manch' here in the K L Saigal Hall. The event, dedicated to Dogri poetry, brought together celebrated poets and literary enthusiasts, offering an enriching experience for the audience.

The 'Sahitya Manch' showcased the creative brilliance of prominent Dogri poets, including Dr. Om Goswami, Om Vidyaarthi, Mangal Das Dogra, and T R Magotra. Each poet recited their compositions, weaving a tapestry of emotions through their eloquent verses. The poetry session not only highlighted the beauty of the Dogri language but also touched upon diverse themes of culture, tradition, and contemporary life, resonating deeply with the audience.

The session was presided over by the



eminent Dogri poet and Padma Shri awardee Mohan Singh, who also delivered the welcome address. As the Convener Dogri, Sahitya Akademi, New Delhi, Sh. Mohan Singh emphasized the importance

of nurturing regional languages through such platforms and praised the participating poets for their significant contributions to Dogri literature.

Secretary JKAACL, Harvinder Kour

graced the occasion as the Chief Guest. In her insightful address, she appreciated the collaborative efforts of JKAACL and Sahitya Akademi in promoting Dogri language and literature. She highlighted the pivotal role of literature in preserving cultural heritage and encouraged young poets and writers to engage with Dogri and contribute to its growth.

The event was marked by a warm and interactive atmosphere, where poetry enthusiasts and literary figures engaged in meaningful discussions. The immersive experience offered by 'Sahitya Manch' reinforced the cultural identity and linguistic pride associated with Dogri.

Editor Dogri, Reeta Khadyal concluded the program with a heartfelt vote of thanks. She expressed gratitude to the Chief Guest, presiding dignitary, participating poets, and the audience for their support and participation. She also extended her thanks to the organizing teams of JKAACL and Sahitya Akademi for their seamless execution of the event.

## Principal Secretary DMRR&R chairs review meeting regarding "Disaster preparedness-cum-coordination"

REASI, FEBRUARY 28: Deputy Commissioner Nidhi Malik convened a meeting of officers to review and finalize the arrangements for the ensuing holy month of Ramzan. The DC instructed officers of JPDCL and Jal Shakti to ensure uninterrupted power and water supply, especially during Sehri and Iftar times. Emphasizing on the sanitation of towns and municipality areas, the DC directed Executive Officers of Municipal Committees to launch special cleanliness drives in the district with focus on roads, lanes, drains and regular lifting of waste from markets. The CMO was directed to ensure the availability of medical staff and medicines to cater to medical emergencies. She directed fire departments to ensure proper arrangements to deal with any untoward incident. The Food safety officials were asked to conduct regular market inspections to check food quality in the market during the month. She also directed for installation of more lights in their respective towns. Enforcement squads were constituted to keep check on profiteering, hoarding and overcharging by shopkeepers by conducting market checking on regular intervals. Availability of essentials in the market was also reviewed during the meeting, while traffic authorities were directed to ensure availability of transport in evening hours. Among others, the meeting was attended by ADC Rakesh Kumar; SDMs, Dy. SPHQ, ARTO, Tehsildar Reasi, Tehsildar Bhomag, Executive Engineer JPDCL, EO officials from Sheep Husbandry and Fire departments, Mufti Ashraf Misbah.





# The planets are aligned, and so are Europe and India: EU chief Von der Leyen after talks with PM Modi

## AGENCIES

NEW DELHI, FEB 28 (UNI)

European Commission President Ursula Von der Leyen today said that like the alignment of planets in the solar system, Europe and India are aligned and have decided to work together on enhancing economic growth, on exploring a common tech agenda, and for deeper cooperation in security and defence, as she held talks with PM Narendra Modi here.

In her media statement, the EU chief referred often to PM Modi as “dear Narendra”, signalling the warmth of friendship between the two leaders.

Referring to the rare alignment of seven planets in the solar system, she said this celestial event signals transformation and growth. “It is exactly the moment we find ourselves in. The planets are aligned – and so are Europe and India.”

The EU chief said the fact that she is visiting India with the whole College of Commissioners,

on their first visit outside Europe after they took office in December, shows how much the EU values its partnership with India. “We want to take it to new heights. India is a like-minded friend. We are the two largest democracies in the world. And under your leadership, Prime Minister, it has been thriving. We are bound by shared convictions and values. From resilient supply chains to our shared interest in a free and open Indo-Pacific, we are working together.”

Von Der Leyen said the two sides have agreed to work on a new Strategic Agenda, with three main avenues.

The first is economic growth. “The potential is immense. Europe is already India’s biggest trading partner,” she said, and added that the two leaders have tasked their teams to build on the momentum and finalise the Free Trade Agreement before the end of this year. They have also decided to take the Trade and Technology Council to the next level and connect research, innovation



and market uptake, which would include building robust and diverse supply chains in the field of semiconductors.

The second avenue the two sides agreed to explore is a common tech agenda. On clean tech, they will champion the International Solar Alliance and have agreed to launch a Joint Task Force on Green Hydrogen. In the field of digital technologies, she said that Europe and India by working together can shape a future in which AI is a driver of a positive change in their economies and societies. “The European AI Office and India AI Mission have agreed to

deepen cooperation... AI should be at the heart of our Strategic Agenda. The next AI Summit hosted by you, Prime Minister, will take us forward. You can count on the European Union that this Summit is going to be a big success,” she added.

She said the two sides are aiming at the interoperability of their two digital public infrastructures, which are the world’s largest and most advanced. “India’s Aadhaar and the EU digital wallet aim to offer public and private services to nearly two billion citizens. Interoperability of our digital identities will strengthen ties

between the EU and India even more,” she added.

“We are committed to strengthen cooperation in semiconductor R&D and manufacturing. We are cooperating in the future of secure telecommunication networks. In particular, our industrial associations have agreed to closely cooperate on 6G,” Von der Leyen stated.

Referring to the gap in skilled workers in Europe, she said, “People are essential for Europe’s competitiveness. Yet, we face a gap. India can help to close it. Let us increase student and skilled worker exchanges. Let us share expertise, talent and experience.”

The third avenue she mentioned is for deeper cooperation in security and defence. “For Europe, India is a pillar of certainty in an increasingly uncertain world. We know that authoritarian states are getting bolder, ignoring borders and threatening peace at sea. Now is the time to step up our security and defence cooperation on land, at sea and in space.”

She said their Cyber dialogue offers a platform for effective cooperation and information exchanges. On Maritime security, she said that ensuring the security of the Indian Ocean is vital, and proposed expanding their joint naval exercises, building on the successful operations in the Gulf of Guinea and the Red Sea.

She also proposed deepening cooperation in protecting the undersea cables that ensure data connectivity between India and the European Union.

“On defence, we see avenues for cooperation. India is looking into diversifying its military supply and access to new capabilities, so does Europe. Both India and the European Union can be partners on this topic,” she added.

“India and the EU are together greater than the sum of our parts. Together, we send a powerful and positive signal to the world. The planets are aligned – and so are Europe and India,” the European Commission President said.

## Amit Shah holds review meeting on law and order in National Capital



## AGENCIES

NEW DELHI, FEB 28 (UNI)

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Friday chaired a crucial meeting to review the law and order situation here.

The meeting was attended by Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta, Delhi Home Minister Ashish Sood and senior officers from the Delhi government.

Besides, Delhi Police Commissioner Sanjay Arora, Union Home Secretary, Intelligence Bureau (IB) Chief, and senior officers from the Ministry of Home Affairs were also present in the meeting.

According to sources,

the meeting focused on strategies to enhance coordination between the newly formed Delhi government and the Delhi Police, as well as strengthen the policing measures to address emerging threats to law and order in the city.

The meeting also discussed how to improve the coordination between the Delhi Police and the newly formed Delhi government.

The meeting also assumed importance on how to tackle the new law and order challenges in the National Capital while simultaneously strengthening the police’s effort to address these challenges.

## India, EU to conclude FTA by end of this year: PM Modi after talks with EU chief Ursula von der Leyen

## AGENCIES

NEW DELHI, FEB 28 (UNI)

India and the European Union have directed their teams to conclude a mutually beneficial Bilateral Free Trade Agreement by the end of this year, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said after talks with visiting European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen here today.

In his press statement following the talks held at Hyderabad House with the European Commission President and the European College of Commissioners, the PM also said that both sides have agreed to take concrete steps to take forward the ambitious India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor or ‘IMEEC’.

He termed the visit of the President of the European Commission and the College of Commissioners to India as unprecedented, adding that it is first such comprehensive engagement of the European Commission in any single country, and also one of the first visits of the new Commission in its latest term.

The PM said the two sides have held nearly 20 ministerial level meetings of different sectors between yesterday and today.



“Sincere and meaningful discussions were held on various regional and global matters. Many important decisions have been taken to elevate and accelerate our partnership.”

He said the two sides have prepared a blueprint for collaboration in the areas of Trade, Technology, Investment, Innovation, Green Growth, Security, Skilling and Mobility. “We have directed our teams to conclude a mutually beneficial Bilateral Free Trade Agreement by the end of this year,” the PM added.

“To strengthen the investment framework, there has also been talk of moving forward on Investment Protection and GI Agreement. In the field of Technology and Innovation, a trusted and secure value chain is our common priority.”

The two sides have agreed on increasing cooperation in semiconductors, AI, high performance com-

puting and 6G, and also decided to initiate a Space Dialogue, PM Modi said.

“We have decided to conduct a Green Hydrogen Forum and Offshore Wind Energy Business Summit. Joint research shall be undertaken on EV Batteries, Marine plastics and Green hydrogen. We shall also take forward our Joint Plan on Sustainable Urban Development,” the PM said.

“Concrete steps will be taken, to take forward the India - Middle East - Europe Economic Corridor or ‘IMEEC’. I firmly believe that ‘IMEEC’ shall serve as an engine that drives global commerce, sustainable growth and prosperity in the days to come,” the PM added.

Both sides have also seen growing cooperation on issues related to Defence and Security, and will take forward the cooperation on Cyber Security, Maritime Security and Counter Terrorism.

“Both sides agree on

the importance of peace, security, stability and prosperity in the Indo-Pacific region,” he said, and welcomed the EU’s decision to join the “Indo Pacific Oceans Initiative”. Both sides will work together on Triangular Development projects for sustainable and inclusive development in the Indo-Pacific region and Africa.

The two sides have reached a new agreement to increase academia, research and industry partnerships between them, he said, adding “I believe that India’s young talent and Europe’s innovation can together create limitless possibilities”.

India and the EU have decided to create a bold and ambitious roadmap for the India-EU partnership for the period beyond 2025. It will be launched during the next India-EU Summit, the PM said.

He said the visit of the European Commission President to India has imparted new momentum, energy and enthusiasm to the bilateral partnership.

“This journey is the biggest catalyst that will translate our ambition into action.”

“I eagerly look forward to the opportunity of welcoming you back to India for the next India-EU Summit,” PM Modi said.

## India can remain strong & secure if it has solutions to critical technological challenges: Rajnath

## AGENCIES

HYDERABAD, FEB 28 (UNI)

Union Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Friday said “India can remain strong and secure in adverse situations if it has solutions to critical technological challenges”.

Rajnath called upon the youth to inculcate scientific temper and excel in frontier technologies by making the best use of the internationally competitive infrastructure being established in the country due to the Government’s efforts.

Addressing after inaugurating Vigyan Vaibhav, a two-day science and technology extravaganza organised here as part of National Science Day celebrations, Rajnath said “War is increasingly moving from hardware to software-oriented. New technological breakthroughs are on the horizon and we have to take a lead in transformative technologies such as Artificial Intelligence (AI), Quantum Computing, Machine Learning (ML) and Clean-tech”.

Our youth must adopt scientific outlook & critical thinking and try to go beyond the ordinary, he said and recalled the words of former President Dr APJ Abdul Kalam who said “Science is a beauti-



ful gift to humanity; we should not distort it but use it for betterment of society”.

The Union Defence Minister reiterated Prime Minister Narendra Modi-led Government’s commitment to harness modern technology for the safety and security of the nation, terming education in the field as crucial for the future.

India’s youth possesses tremendous potential and it is the Government’s endeavour to harness their capabilities to achieve the vision of Viksit Bharat by 2047, he said.

Rajnath Singh threw light on the New Education Policy 2020 which aims to transform science education in the country by encouraging creativity, critical thinking and innovation.

The theme of this year’s National Science Day -- ‘Empowering Indian youth

space technologies developed by DRDO and leading Indian industries. The exhibition aimed to ignite curiosity, inspire innovation, and encourage young minds to pursue careers in STEM fields, fostering the next generation of scientists, engineers, technopreneurs who will propel India towards global technological leadership.

Secretary, Department of Defence R&D and Chairman DRDO Dr Samir V Kamat; President, Aeronautical Society of India (AeSI) Dr G Satheesh Reddy; Director Generals and Directors of DRDO; CMDs of PSUs and heads of industries attended the event organized jointly by DRDO, AeSI, and Kalam Institute of Youth Excellence to commemorate National Science Day in honour of legendary scientist Sir CV Raman and his ground-breaking contributions to science.

The event brings together policymakers, scientists, industry leaders, academicians, and young innovators to discuss and showcase advancements that will shape the nation’s future. As India advances towards Viksit Bharat by 2047, it serves as a reminder that the path to self-reliance is paved with scientific excellence, innovation, and collaboration.

## 57 workers buried as avalanche hits BRO labour camp in Uttarakhand, 10 rescued

## AGENCIES

NEW DELHI, FEB 28 (UNI)

As many as 57 workers of a BRO Labour Camp were buried when an avalanche struck the site between Mana and Badrinath on Friday.

According to the Indian Army, the incident took place at around 0715 hours that buried 57 workers inside eight containers and

one shed.

The Indian Army response teams, comprising more than 100 personnel from Ibex Bigade, were immediately mobilised comprising doctors, ambulances and plant equipment, the Indian Army said.

By 1150 hours, the teams had located five containers and successfully rescued 10 individuals, all alive. Of the 10 rescued, four personnel

are reported to be in critical condition.

Search operations are ongoing for the remaining three containers, with the aim of rescuing the trapped individuals, they said.

Due to subsequent small-scale avalanches in the area, progress in rescue operations is slow and being carried out with due caution.

Heavy snowfall continues in the region, and GREF is

working on clearing the road between Joshimath and Mana.

Additional medical resources from Joshimath are being mobilised to Mana to assist with the rescue and medical aid.

Meanwhile Defence Minister Rajnath Singh termed the incident as unfortunate and said that the administration is providing all possible assistance to the affected.

## 15 Bangladeshi with 5 Indian touts arrested in Tripura

## AGENCIES

AGARTALA, FEB 28 (UNI)

In an intelligence based operation against infiltration in the border villages of Kailasahar in Tripura’s Unakoti district 13 Bangladeshi including three females, three males, and seven children, and three Indian touts were apprehended.

BSF statement here on



Friday said all the Bangladeshi are resident of Moulvibazar, Sunamgunj, Netragunj, Netrokona, and Bari-

sal districts while Indian touts are Kajal Das of Silchar in Assam, Ajit Das of Unakoti and Prasanjit Deb-nath of Dhalai in Tripura.

In a concerted effort to curb illegal cross-border activities, on the intervening night of Thursday, a joint operation was conducted with the Government Railway Police at Agartala Railway Station.

This operation led to

the apprehension of two Indian nationals involved in facilitating the unauthorized entry of Bangladeshi into Indian territory.

Another special operation was launched in association with Tripura police in which two Bangladeshi Nationals were apprehended near old ONGC, when they were trying to cross over to Bangladesh, the statement added.



## Dr. Tasaduk Nominated For 2025 Indian Achiever’s Award

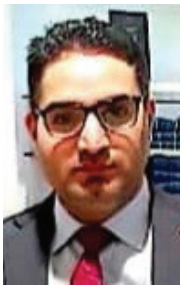
Kashmir-based medico cum noted columnist Dr Tasaduk Hussain Itoo has been nominated for the prestigious Indian Achievers Award 2025 by Indian Achievers Forum for his exceptional contributions to healthcare, medical education, and public health awareness in Jammu & Kashmir and beyond. The nomination is a testament for Dr.



Itoo's extensive academic achievements, including medical writing, research and academic leadership, mentorship, patient care and guidance and affiliations at leading organizations such as the American College of Physicians, the International Diabetes Federation, and Royal College of Physicians. The Indian Achievers Award is a coveted awards program by Indian Achievers

Forum -- that recognizes individuals who have demonstrated excellence, innovation, and leadership in their respective fields. Pertinently, Dr Itoo is a Fellow of the International Diabetes Federation (IDF Fellow, Belgium) and doctor at Narayana Health. The Indian Achievers Forum has paid their good wishes to Dr Itoo on this achievement.

## IMPLICATIONS OF TOBACCO



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

As per recent data by WHO, across the globe around 3.5 million hectares of land are converted for tobacco production each year, besides that growing tobacco also contributes to deforestation of around 2 lakh hectares of land per year.

As per another statement from WHO, tobacco growing is resource intensive and requires heavy use of pesticides and fertilizers, which contribute to soil degradation, besides that the land used for tobacco growing has a lower capacity for growing other crops, such as any food -- since tobacco depletes soil fertility. And, compared with other agricultural activities such as maize growing and even livestock grazing -- tobacco farming has a far more destructive impact on ecosystems as tobacco farmlands are more prone to desertification.

One of the important negative impacts of tobacco growing and production is that it exacerbates food insecurity -- which is emerging as a global issue of social cum public health concern

-- that needs serious attention and redressal. While food is one of the most essential requirements for the sustenance of human life, there are millions of people worldwide who couldn't afford a healthy diet and fulfill the need for regular access to nutritious food.

The developmental, economic, social, and medical impacts of the global burden of food insecurity are serious and lasting for individuals, families, communities and countries. Having said, unhealthy diets and poor nutrition are among the top risk factors for diet-related non-communicable diseases including cardiovascular diseases, certain cancers, and diabetes.

One of the important consequences of rising food insecurity is the development of malnutrition in general and undernutrition in particular - in all its forms (including wasting, stunting, underweight, inadequacy/deficiency of vitamins and minerals).

While every country in the world is affected by one or more forms of malnutrition - the major impact is found to occur in middle and low income countries, including India. As a result, combating malnutrition in all its forms is becoming one of the serious global health challenge. Undernutrition makes children in particular much more vulnerable to disease and death.

Generally speaking, all age groups are at risk of malnutrition -- women, infants, children, and adolescents. Poverty amplifies

the risk - people who are poor are more likely to be affected by different forms of malnutrition. Moreover, malnutrition increases health care costs, reduces productivity, and slows economic growth, which can accentuate a cycle of poverty and ill-health.

Secondly, the most disastrous consequences of tobacco growing and production are its associated health risks directly or indirectly. For example, the intensive handling of insecticides and toxic chemicals during the cultivation of tobacco is attributed to cause ill health among many farmers and their families.

Smoking tobacco poses multiple health risks to human body and development of multiple disease conditions, besides posing a threat to living beings around us, including the environment we live in. And smoking tobacco is the crucial cause of diseases of almost every organ system of the human body most common being lung cancers, stroke and heart diseases, including other lifestyle diseases. We could see rising incidence of such medical conditions nowadays -- one of the prominent risk factor being smoking tobacco.

More importantly, exposure to second-hand smoke raises the risk -- by as much as 30 percent -- that others will get lung cancer and many other types of cancer, besides pose a risk for development of heart diseases. Moreover, chewing tobacco use is also a risk factor for the development

of oral cancers, gum disease, tooth decay and tooth loss, and have possible links to other cancers as well.

To address the problem, the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control offers specific principles and policy options on the promotion of economically viable alternatives for tobacco workers, growers and individual sellers -- to move into the production of alternative sustainable food crops, and on enhancing protection of the environment and the health of people.

Moreover, the campaign focuses on to acknowledge governments and policy-makers to step up legislation, develop suitable policies and strategies, and enable market conditions for tobacco farmers to shift to growing sustainable food crops that would provide them and their families with a better life. And, the land used to grow tobacco could be more efficiently used to achieve United Nations Sustainable Development Goals like SDG 2 (to end hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture) and SDG 3 (to ensure healthy lives and promote wellbeing for all at all ages).

More to say, there is a dire need to held more awareness public campaigns to sensitize the society towards the ill effects of smoking (and chewing) tobacco on human body, our environment and other living beings and to ensure the ways for its prevention.

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## HT-HEALTH

## STEM hiring in tier 2 and 3 Indian cities to rise by 15-20 pc by 2027: Report

AGENCIES  
NEW DELHI

With tech companies expanding their hiring focus to tier 2 and tier 3 cities, jobs for science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) graduates from these regions is expected to rise by 15-20 per cent by 2027, a report said on Friday.

STEM opportunities are growing in locations such as Bengaluru, Hyderabad and Pune. Additionally, India's overall STEM sector is projected to see a 40-45 per cent increase by 2027, driven by rising demand for skilled professionals across industries, according to the report by NLB Services. A Centre for Security and Emerging Technology (CSET) report on the global distribution of STEM graduates reveals that 34 per cent of all graduates in India come from STEM disciplines.

Additionally, indus-



try insights indicate that India's annual STEM graduate output is sufficient to meet the IT-related workforce demands of Europe and the US, including specialised roles. This highlights the important role of STEM in promoting employment and accelerating economic growth. The growing emphasis on STEM education and workforce development is a testament to India's commitment to innovation and economic progress.

"This is also reflected in the Union Budget announcement focusing on transforming India's education landscape with initiatives like 50,000

Atal Tinkering Labs, high-speed internet for rural schools, AI integration, and skill development," said Sachin Alug, CEO, NLB Services.

The tinkering labs will help in research in the STEM field where students can practice new ideas and approaches. Additionally, Prime Minister Narendra Modi's 'One Day as a Scientist' initiative, for National Science Day 2025, encourages young minds to engage with research institutions, fostering hands-on scientific exploration, Alug mentioned.

Covering engineering, technology, and scien-

tific research opportunities, the STEM domain includes roles such as software developer, computer network architect, environmental engineer, and biochemist with the most sought-after positions being software developers (24 per cent), data analysts (18 per cent), and AI/ML specialists (15 per cent).

Each year, more than 1.5 million students take the Joint Entrance Examination (JEE), competing for roughly 16,000 seats at the Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs).

Likewise, the National Eligibility cum Entrance Test (NEET) sees over 1.8 million aspirants vying for around 90,000 MBBS seats. This fierce competition reflects the high societal and economic value placed on STEM careers, driven by lucrative salary prospects and the perception of greater job stability in these fields.

## Indian private hospitals to add 10K beds by next fiscal, 6K added in FY25: Report

AGENCIES  
NEW DELHI

Private hospitals in India have increased their capacity by around 6,000 beds this fiscal, according to a report on Friday.

The report by Crisil Ratings, based on an analysis of 91 private hospitals, showed that this will be followed by 4,000 beds next fiscal, at an investment of Rs 11,500 crore. Together, the 10,000 beds will equal the number of beds added between fiscals 2020 and 2024.

"With occupancy close to the peak of 65-70 per cent and continued demand for quality healthcare, private hospitals are investing around Rs 25,000 crore this fiscal and the next, nearly 80 per cent higher than the average annual investment in the previous four fiscals," said Anuj Sethi, Senior Director, Crisil Ratings.

"Three-fourths of the

capex will be funded through internal accruals. Plus, healthy return metrics have attracted a substantial investment of Rs 55,000-60,000 crore from private equity and equity markets since fiscal 2022," he added.

Currently, private hospitals account for about 63 per cent of the sectoral revenue in India. Between fiscals 2020-2024, private hospitals clocked a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of about 18 per cent in revenue and healthy operating profitability of around 18 per cent, ensuring strong cash flow, the report said.

"Their strong performance and the relatively low bed capacity per person in India vis-a-vis developed and developing nations has spurred substantial investments through private equity and initial public offerings (IPOs). This has strengthened balance sheets and enabled hospitals to

pursue ambitious bed additions without materially impacting their credit profiles," it added.

Further, half of the new beds will come from greenfield expansions, highlighting significant investment in new healthcare infrastructure. About 40 per cent will comprise brownfield development, focusing on modernising and optimising existing facilities. The remaining 10 per cent will result from large players taking over under-construction hospitals and small and mid-sized hospitals, reinforcing organic growth efforts, the report said.

"The large proportion of greenfield expansion poses risks related to timely completion and ramp-up in occupancies. However, given that about 70 per cent of these projects are in metropolitan/Tier 1 cities, where hospitals reach optimal occupancy and break-even in 12-15 months, the pressure

on profitability and associated return metrics is likely to be limited," said Naren Kartic. K, Associate Director, Crisil Ratings.

"Moreover, recent equity raises have strengthened balance sheets, allowing for absorption of capex debt without materially impacting debt protection metrics," he added.

Notably, the interest coverage ratio and total debt to EBITDA -- both key debt protection metrics -- are expected to stay healthy at around 8.0 times and 1.2 times, respectively. This mirrors last year's performance and lending stability to credit profiles.

While healthy demand for quality healthcare should keep occupancy high despite the bed addition, the ability of hospitals to sustain operating profitability and regulatory changes will remain monitorable in the road ahead, the report added.

## Twin studies show neurological, respiratory disorders linger up to three years post-Covid

AGENCIES  
NEW DELHI

While the Covid-19 pandemic is over, its effects continue to haunt a large majority of people infected by the infectious disease. Two separate studies have shown that several neurological and respiratory disorders as well as other health complications continue to affect people who were hospitalised with the disease.

In the first study, a team of researchers from France studied data from nearly 64,000 French residents who were followed for up to 30 months. Their findings, published in the journal Infectious Diseases, showed that patients who were hospitalised due to Covid have experienced a higher rate of deaths from any cause -- 5,218 per 100,000 people.

In the 30 months monitored, these people were more likely to be hospitalised for any reason. And they were particularly at



high risk for neurological, psychiatric, cardiovascular, and respiratory problems.

While there was no difference between men and women in the risk of hospitalisation, women were hospitalised more due to psychiatric problems. Elderly over 70 years of age were also at high risk of hospitalisation due to organ-specific disorders.

Notably, the risks remained high for up to 30 months for neurological and respiratory disorders, chronic kidney failure, and diabetes.

"Even 30 months after hospitalisation, Covid-19 patients remained at an increased risk of death or severe health complications, reflecting the long-lasting, wider consequences of the disease

on people's lives," said Dr Charles Burdet, an Infectious Diseases specialist, at Universite Paris Cite.

"These findings are a stark reminder of the far-reaching impact of Covid, which extends far beyond the initial infection," added lead author Dr Sarah Tubiana, infectious diseases expert, at the Clinical Investigation Center at Bichat Hospital (Paris).

The second study, led by US researchers from the universities of Rush, Yale, and Washington, followed 3,663 participants for three years.

Their findings, published in The Lancet Regional Health, long Covid patients had worse physical and mental health outcomes up to three years after initial infection.

While the majority of those with long Covid did not resolve, vaccination was associated with better outcomes, the researchers said.

## Indian pharma sector sees growth at 8 pc CAGR, export rates spike by 9 pc in 2024: Report

AGENCIES  
NEW DELHI

The Indian pharma sector has grown at 8 per cent CAGR and has also seen a 9 per cent increase in export rates in 2024, according to a report.

The report by McKinsey & Company showed that the pharma sector in the country is witnessing rapid production growth. Expanding its capabilities in APIs and biotechnology, it has grown at 8 per cent CAGR, twice the global average. The country also emerged as the world's largest supplier of generic medicines, with a 9 per cent pharma export growth rate, nearly double the global average, the report said. Currently, India meets 20 per cent of global demand. This includes over 40 per cent of generic medicines being supplied to the US, and 25 per cent to the UK. The country also supplies over 60 per cent of the world's vaccines and 70 per cent of global antiretroviral



drugs for HIV treatment.

Further the report showed that India is also marching ahead in terms of emerging modalities like mRNA, cell and gene therapies, and antibodies. These are witnessing a growth at 13-14 per cent CAGR, surpassing conventional drug growth.

Notably, the pharma sector in India has seen an increase in the number of US Food and Drug Administration (USFDA) registered generic manufacturing sites. In 2024,

India had a network of 752 FDA-approved, 2,050 WHO GMP-certified, and 286 EDQM-approved plants.

There has been a sharp improvement in compliance outcomes over the last several years. The incidences of 'official action indicated' (OAI) after USFDA inspections dropped by 50 per cent between 2013-14 and 2023-24.

The pharma sector has also seen a surge in green manufacturing initiatives,

with 10 of India's top 20 pharma companies pledging for over 30 per cent emissions reduction by 2030.

Despite these progresses the industry faces critical challenges as it reaches a tipping point. Disruptions such as digital transformation, smart automation, and the rise of new treatment modalities could reshape pharmaceutical operations. Geopolitical shifts, nearshoring trends, and increasing sustainability demands also pose potential risks, the report said.

"India's pharmaceutical industry stands strong today because of what it has built over the last decade," said Vishnukaant Pitty, Partner, McKinsey & Company.

"With disruptions on the horizon, it is crucial for the industry to embrace these strategic themes and fundamentally transform operating model to unlock a high-performance future," he added.





## Vidarbha secure first-innings lead over Kerala

AGENCIES

NAGPUR, FEB 28 (UNI)

Vidarbha gained a crucial first-innings lead of 37 runs against Kerala at stumps on Day 3 of the Ranji Trophy final here on Friday.

Kerala, despite a promising start, faltered in the final session, finishing at 342 in response to Vidarbha's 379.

Captain Sachin Baby played a resilient 98-run knock, keeping Kerala's hopes alive, but his dismissal marked a turning point. Until then, he had rotated the strike effectively and found boundaries at regular intervals.

However, an attempt to accelerate his scoring resulted in his downfall, allowing Vidarbha to regain control. The run flow was stifled post his dismissal, leading to a flurry of wickets.

## Ultimate Table Tennis makes Ahmedabad debut with Season 6 set to begin on May 29

AGENCIES

AHMEDABAD, FEB 28 (UNI)

Ultimate Table Tennis (UTT), India's premier table tennis league, will return for Season 6 from May 29 to June 15, and will see Ahmedabad playing host for the first time.

As UTT continues to grow, eight teams featuring a dynamic mix of top Indian and international table tennis stars will battle for the crown, with defending champions Goa Challengers looking to claim a historic third title.

Ahmedabad is fast cementing its place in India's sporting ecosystem, becoming a hotbed for multiple disciplines with world-class infrastructure and a vision to host marquee events, such as the 2030 Youth Olympics and the 2036 Olympic Games, in the near future.

# Women football referees workshop in Srinagar will immensely benefit youth of J&K: Nadiya Nighat

AGENCIES

MUMBAI, FEB 28 (UNI)

Nadiya Nighat is already a trailblazer in Indian sport, she is the first ever female football coach in Kashmir and has used the sport as a tool for the upliftment of other women in the Kashmir region.

Having first started playing with boys, Nadiya continues to don many hats in the sport of football. She became the first female football coach in Kashmir at just 19 in 2015.

Hailing from the Rambagh area in Srinagar, Nadiya has stood firm against perceptions and gender bias to carve a niche for herself as one of the leading voices in the region

Reliance Foundation Youth Sports (RFYS) is dedicated to promoting football and empowering women across all levels of the game.

As part of its various initiatives to empower women in football, RFYS hosted the Women's Football Referees Workshop on February 21 and 22 in Srinagar, in collaboration with the All India Football Federation (AIFF). This initiative aims to upskill and inspire over 170 women



match officials across India, fostering a stronger and more inclusive refereeing ecosystem.

The workshops will continue in Kolkata (March 1-2), Shillong (March 8-9), Chennai (March 15-16) and Mumbai (March 19-20).

Nadiya hailed the initiative, saying, "This workshop is a great platform for the women officials in the region to gain knowledge. We have a lot of women who have not played professional football but want to be referees. An initiative like this helps them make that step up and acquire additional skills. I'm sure that from the 16 women from Kashmir who took part in this workshop, a few will go on to officiate at the highest level.

A workshop like this will immensely benefit the youth of Jammu & Kashmir."

Nadiya first started off playing cricket before football piqued her interest in 2007 as a 11-year old. "While fielding in cricket, I would always enjoys using my leg to stop the ball. When I got to know that a few boys who used to stay near our house had started playing football, I decided to join them.

I didn't even know that football was a sport at that time, all I knew was that I liked kicking a ball," Nadiya says about her first memories of the sport.

Nadiya still continues to be an active player alongside being a coach.

"I have played for many different teams at the national level. Even now, I still continue to play.

I most recently took part in the 38th National Games in Uttarakhand," she adds.

Wanting to inspire the young girls in Kashmir she says, "It might be unrealistic but I still dream of playing for the Indian national team. I just want to be a part of at least one national camp. Only so that young girls in Kashmir have a role model in

front of them that they can aspire to emulate and follow in the footsteps of. It was something that I never had while growing up."

Each workshop will see match officials from neighbouring regions participate. For instance, the Srinagar session welcomed participants from Chandigarh, Punjab, Jammu, Himachal Pradesh, and other nearby areas. Expert AIFF instructors will lead the workshops, including Uvena

Fernandes-the only Indian assistant referee to officiate in a FIFA World Cup final-and Maria Rebelo, former captain of the Indian women's national team and a FIFA-listed referee.

In November 2024, RFYS organized a workshop for Indian Women's League (IWL) match officials, focusing on enhancing technical skills and match-day performance.

Since 2022, RFYS in collaboration with AIFF and other strategic partners, has conducted multiple similar workshops, benefiting over 620 coaches and women match officials and empowering them to play critical roles in developing Indian football.



TWO- DAY STRENGTH LIFTING CHAMPIONSHIP CONCLUDES SUCCESSFULLY IN SRINAGAR

## RPHQ Baramulla hosts thrilling skiing competition at Gulmarg

HT NEWS NETWORK

GULMARG, FEB 28

Kashmir.

To promote sportsmanship, community engagement, and healthy activities among the youth, Range Police Headquarters Baramulla successfully organized a one-day skiing competition at Gulmarg, attracting nearly 50 enthusiastic participants from all districts of North

The competition witnessed enthusiastic participation from students and locals, who showcased their skiing skills on the slopes of Gulmarg. The event was a wonderful example of how the community comes together to celebrate not just sports but the spirit of unity, resilience, and collaboration.

## New format unveiled for Hockey India Senior Women National Championship in Panchkula

AGENCIES

NEW DELHI, FEB 28 (UNI)

The stage is set for the 15th Hockey India Senior Women National Championship 2025, which will take place from March 1 to 12 at the Tau Devi Lal Hockey Stadium, Panchkula.

In a significant development, Hockey India has introduced a new format featuring a promotion and relegation system, adding an extra layer of competitiveness and excitement to the tournament.

The 2025 edition will see the participation of 28 teams, classified into three Divisions: Division A, Division B, and Division C. This new format not only enhances the competition but also provides a clear pathway for teams to ascend to higher divisions or risk relegation based on their performance.

Division A: The Battle for the Title

The top 12 teams,



Pool A: Telangana Hockey, Hockey Uttarakhand, Assam Hockey, Hockey Rajasthan, Hockey Association of Bihar

Pool B: Delhi Hockey, Chhattisgarh Hockey, Hockey Chandigarh, Hockey Himachal

The top two teams from Division B will earn promotion to Division A for the next season, while the bottom two will be relegated to Division C. No knock-out rounds will be held in Division B; the league standings will determine promotions and relegations.

Division C: Rising Through the Ranks

Seven teams in Division C will vie for promotion to Division B.

Pool A: Kerala Hockey, Dadra & Nagar Haveli and Daman & Diu Hockey, Hockey Gujarat

Pool B: Hockey Andhra Pradesh, Le Puducherry Hockey, Hockey Arunachal, Hockey Jammu and Kashmir

including defending champions Hockey Haryana, will compete in Division A for the coveted championship trophy. The teams are split into four pools:

Pool A: Hockey Haryana, Hockey Association of Odisha, Hockey Karnataka

Pool B: Hockey Maharashtra, Manipur Hockey, Hockey Punjab

Pool C: Hockey Jharkhand, Hockey Mizoram, Hockey Unit of Tamil Nadu

Pool D: Hockey Madhya Pradesh, Hockey Bengal, Uttar Pradesh Hockey

Each team will play in a league format within their respective pools. The

top two teams from each pool will advance to the Quarterfinals, scheduled for 9th March, followed by the Semifinals on 10th March, and the Final and 3rd/4th place play-off on 12th March.

The winner will lift the 15th Hockey India Senior Women National Championship 2025 trophy, while the bottom two teams will be relegated to Division B for the next edition.

Division B: The Quest for Promotion

Nine teams will compete in Division B, with the goal of earning promotion to Division A. The teams are divided into two pools:

## It has been possible due to Punjab Kings: Shashank

AGENCIES

MOHALI, FEB 28 (UNI)

After a great Indian Premier League season last year, Punjab Kings' explosive batter Shashank Singh is ready to don the red jersey once again and prove his mettle.

Having made the headlines with his impressive match-winning performances in season 17 of the tournament, Shashank described how his life has changed in this one year.



Shashank's back-to-back thrilling performances earned him immense popularity, making him

the ninth most searched athlete on Google across the globe in 2024.

He grabbed eyeballs when he scored 61 not out in just 29 balls against Gujarat Titans and helped the team end up on the winning side.

Speaking about the same, Shashank said, "I did not know that Google releases a list of people who are searched across the world. It's a big thing honestly. I prefer celebrating in solace. But deep

inside, it feels good that people across India and the world are searching for my name and knowing what I do."

Singh credited his time with Punjab for the same. "It has been possible because of the Punjab Kings. There are so many cricketers who are talented, and playing at the top level but Punjab Kings has always shown trust in me and have backed me. It's true that I worked hard as well."

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