



Elected Government will Fullfill all Promises made to the People : CM Omar Abdullah



■ HT News Network

Srinagar, Mar 1: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah Saturday said that there is no need for a shadow cabinet as the elected

government in Jammu and Kashmir will fulfil the promises made to the people.

Speaking to reporters after offering condolences to Mirwaiz-e-Kashmir Moulvi Umar

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CM Omar Abdullah reviews Ramadan arrangements, directs officers to ensure seamless facilities

■ HT News Network

SRINAGAR, MARCH 01: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah today chaired a high-level meeting to review the arrangements made for the holy month of Ramadan, which commences tomorrow.

The Chief Minister emphasized that people rightfully expect their elected government to take all necessary measures to ensure they do not face any inconvenience during this sacred month.

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Announcing Truce in 1947, Invoking Article 370 was Nehruvian Blunder : Dr Jitendra Singh

Says PM Modi led Govt committed to reclaim PoJK

■ HT News Network

New Delhi, Mar 01: Terming insertion of the Article 370 in the Indian Constitution as one of the biggest "Nehruvian blunders", Union Minister Dr. Jitendra Singh on Saturday said that Jawhar Lal Nehru's ceasefire decision prevented the reclaiming of Pakistan occupied Jammu and Kashmir (PoJK).

Speaking at the PoJK Resolution Day event organized by the Jammu and Kashmir People's Forum and the Mirpur PoJK Sacrifice Committee at the Indian Society of International Law Auditorium here, the Union Minister, according to the news agency—said, "When the Indian Army was on the verge of reclaiming the



BJP will play a role of 'good' opposition in J&K Assembly: Dr Jitendra Singh

Jammu, Mar 01: Union Minister Jitendra Singh on Saturday said that Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) will play a role of "good opposition" in the

territory of Mirpur, now part of PoJK, in 1947 Nehru (the then Prime Minister of India) announced unilateral ceasefire."

Dr Singh stated that the truce was declared without consulting the cabinet, as Nehru, in his attempt to be a "messiah of peace," halted military operations when the Army needed just two more days to complete its mission.

Dr Singh said, "Insertion of Article 370 (which provided special status to J&K) into the Constitution kept J&K on edge till August 5, 2019, when PM Modi led government scrapped it. This temporary Article was one of the biggest Nehruvian blunders."

He went on to criticize Nehru's decision to take Kashmir to

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Weather improves after 4-day wet spell MeT predicts intermittent rains, snow till Mar 12

■ HT News Network

Srinagar, Mar 01: After a major wet spell of the season, the weather improved across Jammu and Kashmir on Saturday, while the weatherman predicted that light rains and snow would continue in the Union Territory till March 12. According to the details available with the news agency—, Batote in Jammu division received a rainfall of 28.8 mm in the intervening night of Friday-Saturday till 08:30 am today while 19.0 mm rainfall was recorded in Banihal.

The details read that 10.0 mm rainfall was

recorded in Baderwah during the period while Jammu and Katra received the rainfall of 7.6 mm and 7.0 mm respectively till today morning.

Nearly 12.2 mm rainfall was recorded in Qazigund till this morning while 11.2mm precipitation was recorded in Kokernag.

Srinagar, the summer capital of Jammu and Kashmir, recorded a rainfall of 1.4 mm till 8:30 AM.

Meanwhile, Director Meteorological department (MeT), Dr Mukhtar Ahmad said that generally cloudy weather is expected on Sunday

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Stage set for stormy budget session NC, Congress, BJP to hold legislature party meetings in Jammu

■ HT News Network

Srinagar, Mar 01: The stage is set for a stormy budget session of the Jammu & Kashmir Legislative Assembly starting on March 3 as issues like Article 370, reservation, human rights, and election commitments made by the National Conference in its election manifesto are expected to take center stage. Ahead of the session, all major political parties are holding



separate meetings of their legislature parties in the winter capital, Jammu, tomorrow to chalk out their strategies for the session.

The divided opposition, comprising the BJP and Kashmir-based parties, is set to take on the ruling National Conference-led

alliance over a gamut of issues. While the 28-member BJP plans to corner the government on commitments made by the National Conference in its election manifesto, ranging from free electricity to free ration, the Kashmir-based parties, including the PDP and Peoples Conference, will question the government on issues like Article 370 and the alcohol ban.

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Budget Session: Restoration of statehood Cong's primary agenda, says Karra

'No joint meeting of NC-Cong legislators called

■ HT News Network

Srinagar, Mar 01: Jammu and Kashmir Pradesh Congress Committee (JKPCC) president Tariq Hameed Karra on Saturday said that the party's primary agenda in the upcoming budget session



of the J&K Legislative Assembly will be the restoration of statehood. Karra, while speaking to the news agency—said the Congress legislators will meet in Jammu on Sunday to devise their strategy. Responding to a query wheth

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Will consider plan B and C if statehood not restored in J&K: Tanvir Sadiq

■ HT News Network

Srinagar, Mar 01, : Senior National Conference leader and Spokesperson NC Tanvir Sadiq said that they are hopeful about the restoration of statehood to Jammu and Kashmir very soon.

Speaking to reporters to the news agency JKNS Tanvir expressed optimism that the central government would address



this issue in next few months He said that the dual power structure in J&K was causing

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In 3-years, Srinagar gardens generate over Rs. 1.5 crore revenue

Tourist footfall crosses 3.2 lakh in 2022-23, dips to 1.8 lakh in 2024-25

■ HT News Network

Srinagar, Mar 01: The gardens and parks under the jurisdiction of the Floriculture Officer in District Srinagar have collectively generated over Rs. 1.5 crore in revenue from 2022 to 2025, according to recent data. The revenue was sourced from departmental collections and outsourced ticketing systems across locations like Children's Park, Iqbal Park, Badamwari, and Eidgah Park.

As per the official documents available with news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) at Children's Park, the revenue generated departmentally stood at Rs. 93,864 for the year 2022-23, with the entry ticketing system outsourced at a bid amount of Rs. 13,94,675. However, in 2023-24,

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CS for plugging gaps to achieve set objectives under SBM (G)

■ HT News Network

Srinagar, Mar 01: Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo, today chaired a meeting of the Rural Development Department (RDD) to review the progress made under ensuing implementation plan and the one framed for the year ahead.

Besides ACS Jal Shakti Department, the meeting was attended by Commissioner Secretary, Information & GAD; Secretary, RDD; DG, Rural Sanitation; DG, Codes and other concerned officers.



Dulloo impressed upon the Department to have complete analysis of the works carried out in each panchayat under Swachh Bharat Mission (Grameen) to find out gaps as per the objectives set

under this mission. He made out that such gaps, once found, should be plugged at an earliest for achieving the objectives of this mission. He noted that the villages in

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Liquor Ban Bill: Let It Come to Assembly, Says Omar Abdullah

■ HT News Network

Srinagar, Mar 01: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Saturday stated that the liquor ban bill will be discussed in the Assembly once it is introduced.

In an interview with The Red Mike, Omar Abdullah, as per news agency JKNS, said that the National Conference (NC) has not promised a liquor ban in its manifesto. "Let it come to the Assembly, we will discuss it there," he added.

"We will remind those who have tabled it about their actions when they were in government," he said. He also questioned

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Holy Month Of Ramadan Begins: LG Sinha, CM Greet People

■ HT News Network

Srinagar, Mar 01: Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha has greeted the people on the beginning of holy month of Ramadan. In a message, the Lieutenant Governor said: "Best wishes on the commencement of the holy month of Ramadan. May this sacred month of prayers, blessings and forgiveness inspire us to work towards upliftment of the underprivileged with complete dedication and devotion. May this sacred month also strengthen mutual goodwill and encourage each one of us to follow the path of love and compassion". Chief Minister Omar Abdullah also extended his greetings to the people as the holy month of Ramadan

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Govt Makes Major Reshuffle In Admin, 34 JKAS Officers Transferred

■ HT News Network

Srinagar, Mar 01, : The Jammu and Kashmir Government on Saturday ordered a significant administrative reshuffle, transferring and reassigning 34 Jammu and Kashmir Administrative Service (JKAS) officers across key departments. The orders, issued by the General Administration Department (GAD), aim to streamline governance and fill vacancies ahead of the fiscal year-end.

Vivek Sharma,

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Ahead of Ramadan, Kashmir markets Wore festive look

■ HT News Network

Srinagar, Mar 01: As Kashmir gears up for the first fast of the holy month tomorrow, the markets across the valley wore a festive look on Saturday, with people thronging shops to buy essentials, including dates, fruits, and bakery items.

With a huge rush, the markets in Srinagar and other towns were abuzz with shoppers making last-minute purchases. Vendors and shopkeepers reported an increase in sales, with many setting up special stalls to cater to the rising demand.

"People are buying fruits, dates, and beverages. We are witnessing better sales than usual," said Bilal Ahmad, a fruit vendor in Srinagar, while speaking to the news



agency—Similarly, bakeries and sweet shops saw a surge in customers, with many placing orders for traditional delicacies.

"Ramadan is a time when people love to buy special bakery items. We have been preparing extra stock to meet the demand," said a bakery shop owner in Srinagar city.

Meanwhile, grocery stores were also packed with customers purchasing essentials like rice, pulses, and cooking oil in preparation for Sehri and Iftar meals.

Moreover, with spirit of Ramadan setting in, the festive atmosphere in Kashmir's markets reflects the deep cultural and religious importance of the month for the people of Kashmir. It is worth mentioning, Ramadan is the ninth holy Islamic month for

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SKUAST Kashmir Concludes Four-Day Training on Natural Farming

■ DR.AB QAYOOM

Srinagar, Mar,01: The Sher-e-Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology (SKUAST) Kashmir successfully concluded a four-day training program on the National Mission on Natural Farming (NMNF) today. Organized by the Directorate of Extension, SKUAST Kashmir, in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, Government of India, the program aimed to promote sustainable and eco-friendly agricultural practices among farmers and extension professionals in the region. Speaking at the valedictory session, Vice Chancellor SKUAST Kashmir, Prof. Nazir Ahmed Ganai, emphasized the importance of Natural Farming

in ensuring food security, environmental sustainability, and farmer welfare. He highlighted the need for widespread adoption of such practices to reduce dependency on chemical inputs and promote healthy, organic alternatives. Director Extension, Prof. Raihana Habib Kanth, stressed the significance of collaboration between farmers, scientists, and extension workers to create a resilient agricultural ecosystem in Kashmir. Joint Director, Agriculture Extension Kashmir, Shri Sartaj Ahmed Shah, lauded the strong participation of extension functionaries from various Krishi Vigyan Kendras (KVKs) and urged them to take the knowledge gained to the grassroots level. During the program, participants underwent hands-on training and



interactive sessions on natural farming principles, sustainable cropping systems, livestock integration, and bioinoculant preparation. Leading experts, including Prof. Purshottam

Singh, Prof. Amal Saxena, Prof. Parmmeet Singh, Prof. Lal Singh, Prof. Farhanaz Rasool, Dr. Rush-eeba Manzoor, and several KVK scientists, provided insights into sustainable farming tech-

niques. The program witnessed enthusiastic participation from agricultural professionals, scientists, and extension workers, who committed to promoting natural farming practices

among local farmers. This initiative aligns with the Indian government's broader vision

of sustainable agriculture, aiming to improve soil health, enhance farm productivity,

Directorate of Extension, SKUAST- K Held Awareness Program for Farmers Under NMAET

Srinagar,: A one-day awareness program was organized at the Directorate of Extension, Sher-e-Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology (SKUAST-K), under the National Mission on Agriculture Extension and Technology (NMAET). The event aimed to empower farmers through the Atma Samarthya Yojana (ATMA), promoting self-reliance in agriculture. Prof. Raihana Habib Kanth, Director of Extension, highlighted the significance of seed production at the farmer level to reduce dependence on external sources. "Encouraging local seed multiplication will enhance self-sufficiency and sustainability," she emphasized. Farmers from Sopore Sub- district, along with scientists and agricultural officers, actively participated in discussions on seed quality, production techniques, and crop management. The program provided valuable insights to help farmers adopt better agricultural practices. This initiative underscores SKUAST-K's commitment to strengthening Kashmir's agricultural sector by equipping farmers with essential knowledge and skills for improved productivity.

CONTINUE FROM FRONT PAGE.....

CM

Farooq and National Conference MLA Hasnain Masoodi, the Chief Minister, according to the news agency—, said that the departments have been directed to ensure better facilities to the people in Ramadan.

Omar visited the residence of Dr Ghulam Sibtain Masoodi in Hyderpora, who passed away this week. Dr Sibtain was brother NC leader Hasnain Masoodi and father-in-law of Mirwaiz Moulvi Umar Farooq

The Chief Minister told reporters that the government is trying to ensure adequate electricity and water supply, especially during Sehri and Iftari.

Asked about the "shadow cabinet" formed by the BJP, he said that there is no provision of such a cabinet in the country. "We have only one cabinet. There is no need for a shadow cabinet. The BJP has ruled in the past and now it is the time for an elected government to serve the public. We will work to fulfil all the promises made to the people of Jammu and Kashmir," he said.

Earlier, had reported that in a first such move by an opposition party in Jammu & Kashmir, the Bhartiya 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.

Sources had said 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 departments assigned to them for assembly interventions and other issues," they had said—)

RAMDHAN

"As the holy month of Ramadan begins tomorrow, the people rightfully expect the government to take all necessary measures to ensure they do not face any difficulties during this sacred month" the Chief Minister said.

He stressed that key departments under pressure must deliver service—particularly the power supply— which must be prioritized. "People want, and we must strive, to ensure that there are no power outages during Sehri and Iftar time. Any necessary shutdowns should be well-planned and curtailment could be made during the day time as per a proper schedule. The maintenance works, wherever required, be also taken up during the day time." CM instructed.

He directed officials to immediately address system issues or faulty distribution transformers (DTs) to avoid disruptions.

On water supply, CM said that the recent spell of snow and rainfall had helped improve the situation but stressed the need for supply of adequate potable water to house holds.

"By the grace of Allah, the recent rainfall over the past few days has been beneficial in this regard," he said.

The Chief Minister also directed officials to focus on cleanliness, particularly around mosques, shrines, traffic management, and making security arrangements.

He noted that both IG Jammu and IG Kashmir have addressed the security concerns. To enhance public service delivery, he directed all Deputy Commissioners to set up a fully staffed and operational district control rooms to promptly address grievances.

"Our collective effort should be to ensure a smooth and hassle-free Ramadan for the people. It is our responsibility to put all necessary arrangements in place," he stated.

The meeting was attended by Advisor to the CM Nasir Aslam Wani, Chief Secretary Atal Dulloo, Additional Chief Secretary Education Shantamanu, Additional Chief Secre-

tary Jal Shakti Shaleen Kabra, Additional Chief Secretary to the Chief Minister Dheeraj Gupta, all Administrative Secretaries, Divisional Commissioners of Kashmir and Jammu, Inspector General of Police Kashmir and Jammu, Deputy Commissioners, Commissioner JMC, MDs of KPDCL/JPDCL, and heads of key departments and Joint Director SMC.

The meeting was conducted both in person and through virtual mode. Earlier, Divisional Commissioner Kashmir, Vijay Bidhuri, presented a detailed report on the arrangements in place for the holy month.

The meeting was informed about the electricity demand during peak hours, particularly at Sehri and Iftari, water supply, sanitation around religious and significant public places, ration distribution for March, traffic deployment plans, police security arrangements, food safety and joint market inspections.

NC BJP

Both the PC and PDP have already set the tone for a stormy session by bringing resolutions and bills on Article 370 and alcohol. The BJP has indicated that it would oppose any move to raise issues like Article 370 in the House. Sunil Sharma, leader of the opposition in the J&K Assembly, told the Speaker during an all-party meeting held in Jammu on February 27 that they wouldn't permit any unconstitutional and anti-national resolution, question, or bill in the House.

As earlier reported, the National Conference and Congress are holding separate legislature party meetings in Jammu tomorrow to devise their strategy for the session. Chief Minister Omar Abdullah will chair the NC meeting at his official residence on Wazarat Road, while Tariq Hamid Karra will preside over the Congress meeting at party headquarters in Jammu. The BJP is also expected to hold its legislature party meeting in Jammu on March 2 or 3—(KNO)

DR JATINDRA

budget session of Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly slated to commence on March 3.

Dr Singh while talking to the reporters, according to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), here said, "We will play a good role of opposition in the assembly. For the first time we have come with such a big majority and our vote share is better, decisions will be taken in the interest of the people following our nationalist ideology and our MLAs are capable of presenting their issues with full preparation."

Dr Singh said that numerous employment options have been created in the past 10 years but its benefits are not reaching Jammu and Kashmir completely as there is "no double engine system" here like Uttar Pradesh and Gujarat; "Our MLAs will also highlight this fact," he added.

The J&K government will be held accountable for the work that is the responsibility of the UT government and which is not being implemented despite the support of the central government, Dr Singh said—(KNO)

ARTICLE 370

the United Nations, calling it another "historical blunder." "Taking the matter to the United Nations prevented India from reclaiming its territory."

He declared that POJK, Pakistan Occupied Territories of Ladakh (POTL), and China Occupied Territories of Ladakh (COTL) are integral parts of India and will remain so.

"The government led by PM Modi is committed to reclaiming POJK," he added—(KNO)

WEATHER

with the possibility of light rain and snow

at isolated places late night today as well.

He added that on March 3, there is a possibility of light to moderate rain and snow at most places, adding that few higher reaches of North & Central Kashmir may receive moderate to heavy snowfall.

From March 4 to 9, he said generally dry weather is expected during the period, adding that a fresh spell of rain and snow is expected between March 10 and 12.

Moreover, the MeT has issued an advisory, advising the tourists, travellers and transporters to follow administration and traffic advisory.

"Farmers should suspend irrigation & other farm operations till March 4. Landslides, rock fall and shooting stones are expected at vulnerable places," the advisory reads.

"Avoid sloppy slopes & avalanche prone areas & follow DGRE's avalanche warning and bulletin," it adds.

Pertinently, J&K witnessed moderate rain and snowfall for the past four days, especially from February 26 to February 28, which led to the increase in the water level in all the water bodies including river Jhelum—(KNO)

MLA

banning alcohol and online gambling in Jammu and Kashmir.

He stated that his party would only extend conditional support to a bill brought by the People's Democratic Party (PDP) for allotment of land after reviewing its all aspects.

He said there is a need for a thorough investigation into how state land was allocated in the past. "If we talk about Jammu, various regimes have allotted land to ministers, MLAs, and their relatives," he said.

Sheikh Khurshid also said that he would also highlight key issues confronting his Langate constituency

On National Conference (NC) chief spokesperson Tanvir Sadiq's remarks about statehood restoration, Khurshid accused the party of lacking a concrete strategy over it. "NC has no plan; they only want to enjoy protocol," he said—(KNO)

TANVEER SADIQ

administrative challenges and that honoring the significant mandate given by the people in the Assembly elections was crucial.

He said that whatever situation is currently in J&K is because of PDP and they shouldn't teach us what to do as we know what we have to do. "We will try to address every issue that was promised by NC in their manifesto," he said.

He questioned that there is BJP government in J&K for the last 10 years and why they failed to bring bills like a ban on Alcohol.

He alleged that PDP and BJP are one and they are just trying not to allow functioning of the assembly properly.—(JKNS)

KARRA

er NC and Congress legislators will hold a joint meeting before the session commences, Kara said, "No such meeting has been called." Asked about the anticipated stormy session, particularly with opposition parties like the People's Conference and the PDP expected to raise issues like the liquor ban, Kara said, "The government has its own standing, while the opposition has its democratic rights to raise issues."

"Our prime issue remains the restoration of statehood. The confusion surrounding governance today is a direct result of the delay in reinstating statehood, which has also impeded the framing of business rules," Kara said.

He also highlighted that the Congress has transformed the demand for statehood into a people's movement, beginning with Jammu.

Pertinently, the last budget session of J&K Assembly took place in 2018 during the PDP-

BJP regime in the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir, which was bifurcated into two Union Territories in August 2019 after abrogation of Article 370.

The National Conference and the Congress contested the assembly elections last year together. Congress has six MLAs but hasn't joined the government, while the NC got a clear mandate by bagging more than 40 seats—(KNO)

3 YEARS

no departmental revenue was recorded, as the ticketing system remained outsourced at a higher bid amount of Rs. 22,98,000. For 2024-25, the department generated Rs. 8,94,646, with the outsourcing bid rising significantly to Rs. 33,02,399. Tourist footfall at Children's Parks saw a notable increase, with 78,994 visitors in 2022-23, 78,044 in 2023-24, and a sharp rise to 1,72,498 in 2024-25.

Iqbal Park, on the other hand, showed consistent growth in departmental revenue, increasing from Rs. 12,32,220 in 2022-23 to Rs. 14,43,162 in 2023-24 and further to Rs. 19,19,130 by February 2025. Despite this, tourist footfall at Iqbal Park declined significantly, from 2,01,786 in 2022-23 to 62,077 in 2023-24, before slightly recovering to 67,333 in 2024-25.

Badamwari Park experienced a mixed trend in revenue generation. In 2022-23, the entry ticketing system was outsourced at Rs. 28,27,300, with no departmental revenue recorded. The following year, departmental revenue was Rs. 34,960, with outsourcing bid amounts rising to Rs. 52,47,017. By 2024-25, departmental revenue surged to Rs. 25,90,250. Tourist footfall at Badamwari Park, however, declined sharply from 3,16,456 in 2022-23 to 1,89,226 in 2023-24 and further to 79,944 in 2024-25.

Eidgah Park recorded modest departmental revenues of Rs. 57,308 in 2022-23 and Rs. 56,445 in 2023-24. In 2024-25, the entry ticketing system was outsourced at Rs. 3,70,111, with no departmental revenue reported. Tourist footfall at Eidgah Park remained relatively low but showed gradual growth, increasing from 3,191 in 2022-23 to 3,832 in 2023-24 and further to 8,740 in 2024-25—(KNO)

LOOK

Muslims across world that involves fasting, prayer, and charity. It is a time of spiritual rejuvenation and community gathering—

BAN

why those advocating for the ban did not initiate a signature campaign when they were in power. "If doing a signature campaign is easy, why didn't they do it when they were in the government?" Omar remarked.

Notably, several members, especially from the PDP, have claimed that they plan to introduce a bill to ban liquor in Jammu and Kashmir.—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.

LG

commences. "This spirit of togetherness will help build a stronger and more resilient community throughout Jammu & Kashmir," he noted.

Chief Minister Omar Abdullah also prayed that Almighty may answer all prayers and accept our fasting for this sacred month.

He also prayed for peace, prosperity and the well-being of all the people of Jammu and Kashmir.

"May Allah's blessings be upon all. Ramzan Mubarak!" he added.

Meanwhile, the Chief Minister chaired a high-level meeting to review the arrangements made for the holy month of Ramadan, which commences tomorrow.

The Chief Minister emphasized that people rightfully expect their elected government to take all necessary measures to ensure they do not face any inconvenience during this sacred month.

"As the holy month of Ramadan begins tomorrow, the people rightfully expect the government to take all necessary measures to ensure they do not face any difficulties during this sacred month" the Chief Minister said.

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GOVT

formerly Special Secretary in the Agriculture Production Department, has been appointed as Director General of Floriculture, Jammu. She will assume charge after the retirement of Jatinder Singh on March 31. Bhavani Rakwal, awaiting adjustment in GAD, is now Project Director of Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan.

Khalid Jahangir, Managing Director of J&K Trade Promotion Organization, moves to the Industries and Commerce Department as Special Secretary, while retaining additional charge as Director of the Entrepreneurship Development Institute.

Naseem Javaid Chowdhary shifts from Horticulture Marketing to Director of School Education, Jammu, while Mohammad Farooq Dar replaces him as Managing Director of the Horticulture Corporation.

Several officers have been assigned dual roles. For instance, Vikas Sharma (Housing and Urban Development) will also lead the AMRUT Mission, and Puneet Sharma (Revenue Department) will oversee critical projects like SVAMITVA and AGRISTACK.

CS

essence should look clean and hygienic for the mission offers sufficient resources to manage every waste to obtain the desired results on ground.

He directed for early completion of the portal for regular monitoring of assets created under SBM (G). He maintained that all these assets were envisaged to make our villages clean and each of these community assets should be put to optimum use for the set purposes these had been created for.

The Chief Secretary also enjoined upon the Department to frame a proper mechanism for Operation & Maintenance (O&M) of these assets too. He asked for certifying the utilization of these assets properly for their actual uses through independent bodies in these villages and panchayats.

ACS, Jal Shakti Department, Shaleen Kabra also apprised of his insights for smooth implementation of this Mission. He advised the Department to analyse the observations carried out by the central government depart-

DC Kulgam reviews implementation of PM Surya Ghar- Muft Bijli Yojana

■ **Farooq Rather**

KULGAM, MARCH 01: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Kulgam, Athar Aamir Khan today chaired a meeting of concerned officers to review the implementation of PM Surya Ghar - Muft Bijli Yojana in the district.

The scheme aims to increase the share of solar roof top capacity and empower residential households to generate their own electricity and reduce the monthly billing with significant financial contribution from the government.

SE, KPDCL (O&M) Circle Bijbehara gave a powerpoint presentation on the subject and apprised the chair that around 1057 applications have been received for registration till date in the district, with fifteen (15) solar plants already commissioned and ten (10) are at inspection stage under the said scheme.

The DC took a comprehensive review of the progress made in installing rooftop solar systems across all electrical sub divisions in the district.

He underlined the numerous benefits of the initiative and urged KPDCL officials to intensify their efforts in raising awareness among the public about the advantages of installing



rooftop solar plants besides meeting the targets well in time.

He emphasized the need for launching a mass outreach campaign to sensitize the public about the scheme and its financial and environmental benefits.

ADDC Altaf Khan, ADC Viqar Giri, ACD, ACR, ACP, Ex. Engineers of KPDCL, PWD, Jal Shakti and Irrigation besides CEO, CMO, CAO, DSHO, CAHO, JKEDA, Tehsildars/ BDO's/BMO's/ZEO's and other District Officers and DDO's participated in the meeting. The scheme aims to increase the share of

solar roof top capacity and empower residential households to generate their own electricity and reduce the monthly billing with significant financial contribution from the government.

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DDC Anantnag chairs DLRC/DCC meeting for Quarter ending December-2024

■ **HT News Network**

ANANTNAG, MARCH 01: To review the performance of banks for the quarter ending December 2024, a District Level Review Committee/ District Consultative Committee (DLRC/ DCC) meeting was today chaired by District Development Commissioner (DDC) Anantnag, Syeed Fakhruddin Hamid. The meeting was attended by key officials, including CPO Anantnag, Cluster Head JK Bank Anantnag, Senior Manager SBI, Chief Agricultural Officer Anantnag, DDM NABARD, RSETI Director, and district coordinators from various banks and government departments. Officials from KVIB, EDB, NRLM, and NULM were also present.

LDM Anantnag, Pervaze Ahmad Mir, provided an overview of the district's banking sector, reporting total deposits of Rs.8,580.92 crore and advances of Rs.6,556.09 crore, resulting in a Credit-Deposit (CD) ratio of 76.40%. He highlighted that the district has 20



Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs), out of which three are credit-linked, supporting agricultural activities and rural entrepreneurship.

Under the agriculture sector, the district recorded a total disbursement of Rs.592.83 crore, with Rs.555.43 crore allocated for crop loans and Rs.1,100.69 crore for MSMEs. The total priority sector lending up to December 2024 stood at Rs.1,829.50 crore, achiev-

ing 57% of the annual target. Meanwhile, the non-priority sector lending reached Rs.1,460.72 crore, recording an achievement rate of 213%.

The LDM also informed the house about significant achievements in government-sponsored schemes, highlighting their role in expanding financial inclusion and supporting economic growth in the district. The LDM further informed the house about the con-

tribution of JKBRSETI Anantnag, which has played a key role in skill development and self-employment generation. The institute has successfully trained 512 candidates under various programs, providing them with essential entrepreneurial skills.

Special focus was placed on Project Unnati and JKREGP, which aim to empower local youth through self-employment opportunities. JKBRSETI continues to foster entrepreneurship and financial inclusion, equipping trainees with the necessary skills to establish sustainable businesses.

DDC directed banks to enhance credit flow to the agriculture sector and allied activities under the Holistic Agriculture Development Program (HADP). He also urged for greater awareness and facilitation of beneficiaries under the PM Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana. Additionally, he emphasized the importance of registering more people under social security schemes through joint coordination among relevant agencies.

Ramadan: Food Safety Team conducts intensified Market Checking in Srinagar

■ **HT News Network**

SRINAGAR, MARCH 01: Following the directions of Deputy Commissioner (DC) Srinagar, Dr Bilal Mohi-Ud-Din Bhat, the Food Safety team has intensified its market checking efforts across the City in wake of the holy month of Ramadan.

The team conducted a thorough inspection of Parimpora Fruit Mandi to ensure the quality of fruits and vegetables available in the market.

During the inspection, the team lifted samples of fruits for analytical purposes. The Food Safety team also directed all Food Business Operators (FBOs) to take necessary measures to protect every food item, including dates, from environmental hazards such as dust, dirt, and other contaminants.

The team warned that anyone found violating any provisions of the Food Safety and Standards Act will be dealt with strictly under the law. The Food Safety Department will continue its inspections and sampling efforts across Srinagar city to ensure that all food products sold in the market are safe for consumption. This intensified market checking drive is part of the Food Safety department's efforts to ensure that citizens have access to safe and healthy food, particularly during the holy month of Ramadan when the demand for food products increases.

The Food Safety team's efforts are aimed at preventing the sale of adulterated or contaminated food products, which can pose serious health risks to consumers. By taking proactive measures, the department hopes to safeguard public health and prevent food borne illnesses..

Kashmiri Student Umar Masoodi Invited by the European Union to Attend EYE2025 in Strasbourg France.

Srinagar:-Kashmiri Student Umar Masoodi Invited by the European Union to Attend EYE2025 in Strasbourg France. Srinagar: Umar Masoodi, a Kashmiri student leader and the State Spokesperson of the Jammu and Kashmir Students Association (JKSA), has been invited by the European Union to participate in the prestigious European Youth Event (EYE2025), scheduled for June 13-14, 2025, in Strasbourg, France. Masoodi, a law student at the University of Kashmir, has been actively involved in JKSA for the past three years, serving the organization in various capacities and steadily rising through the ranks. His selection for this distinguished program reflects his contributions to student leadership, youth advocacy, and international discourse.

Earlier, in 2024, Masoodi was selected for the prestigious Lucerne Academy Program in Switzerland, where he successfully attended a three-week program at the University of Lucerne. The official opening ceremony of EYE2025 will be attended by high representatives of the European Parliament and the City of Strasbourg. As part of the program, Masoodi will



have the opportunity to participate in discussions, engage with Members of the European Parliament (MEPs), and exchange views with experts, activists, and decision-makers on pressing global issues.

EYE2025 is being organized by the European Union and is held every two years, bringing together young leaders from across Europe and beyond. The event provides an unparalleled platform for young changemakers to interact with policymakers, legislators, and thought leaders, fostering dialogue on democracy, human rights, innovation, climate action, and other critical challenges shaping the world today. His participation is expected

to open new avenues for cross-cultural dialogue and collaborative efforts in addressing challenges faced by youth worldwide.

The J&K Students Association has congratulated Umar Masoodi on his selection for this prestigious program, highlighting it as a moment of pride and honor. His journey serves as a source of inspiration for all those who dream of a better future. Masoodi has not only brought laurels to his family but also to his alma mater. The association hopes that the student fraternity will follow the path of this meritorious individual.

The association said that, "Kashmiri students are proving their mettle and excelling in every field. Masoodi's achievement will inspire the students of J&K to aim for the top institutions and programs in the world. We are delighted to learn that he has been selected for this prestigious program. It is a great achievement for a young student, and we congratulate him on achieving such a stupendous and incredible feat. We are confident that he will make the most of this opportunity and continue to inspire others with his accomplishments."

Radio Television Artist Association expresses condolences to Sheikh Tariq Jav

■ **HT News Network**

Srinagar: 1st March J&K Radio, Television Artists, Freelance Producers and Directors Association Srinagar is deeply saddened to know about the passing away of Sheikh Hafeez Akhter (Ex DI Kashmir) who was the elder brother of our President Sheikh Tariq Javaid. Each and every member of the Association mourns and express deep sorrow on the demise of Sheikh Hafeez Akhter. While praying to Allah for bestowing highest place in Jannatul Firdous to the departed soul, whole Association and the artist fraternity stand with the bereaved family in this hour of grief. May Allah grant patience to whole Sheikh dynasty to bear this irreparable loss.

Shantmanu Given Additional Charge of JKBOSE Chairman, SCERT Director

■ **HT News Network**

Srinagar, Mar 01 (JKNS): The Jammu and Kashmir government has assigned Financial Commissioner (Additional Chief Secretary) School Education Department, Shantmanu, IAS the additional charge of Chairman, JKBOSE, and Director, SCERT as an interim arrangement.

As per an official order issued by the General Administration Department (GAD), a copy of which lies with JKNS, "In exercise of the powers conferred by sub-section (1) of section 12 of the Jammu and Kashmir Board of School Education Act, 1975 (Act No. XXVIII of 1975), the Government hereby orders that Mr. Shantmanu, IAS (AGMUT:1991), Financial Commissioner (Additional Chief Secretary), School Education Department, shall discharge the functions of Chairman, J&K Board of School Education and Director, State Council of Educational Research and Training (SCERT), J&K, in addition to his own duties, as an interim arrangement, till further orders."

The move comes shortly after the one-month extension of incumbent Chairman Prof. Parikshat Singh Manhas ended on February 25. Manhas was appointed on deputation for two years starting January 25, 2023, and was expected to vacate office on January 25, 2025. However, despite no extension orders from the Chief Minister, the J&K government extended his tenure for another month, which ended on February 25.

Earlier, the Jammu and Kashmir Education Department shortlisted 14 candidates for the posts of Chairman JKBOSE and Director SCERT, calling them for an interaction on March 5.

The J&K government had reconstituted the Search Committee on December 13, 2024, to recommend candidates for the positions. The committee is led by the Administrative Secretary of the Agricultural Production Department, with members from the School Education Department (SED), General Administration Department (GAD), and Higher Education Department (HED). Additionally, the Vice-Chancellors of the University of Kashmir (KU) and the University of Jammu (JU) are part of the panel. (JKNS)

DC Bandipora convenes meeting on PDS Beneficiary Verification

BANDIPORA, MARCH 01: The Deputy Commissioner (DC) Bandipora, Manzoor Ahmad Qadri on Saturday convened a meeting with the concerned officers to review the progress of verification process of beneficiaries enrolled in the Public Distribution System (PDS) database. The meeting focused on ensuring the accuracy and transparency of the PDS distribution, addressing concerns related to beneficiary lists, and streamlining the verification procedures. It also discussed various measures to improve efficiency and ensure timely delivery of essential services to eligible households.

During the meeting, AD, FCS&CA apprised the chair regarding the status and progress made so far in the survey and assured that the verification process will be completed efficiently and accurately.

On the occasion, the DC directed the concerned to conduct verification process impartially without any bias, ensuring that all actions are carried out without favoritism.

He also urged Tehsildar Bandipora to



closely monitor the mobilization efforts, ensure coordination, and facilitate smooth implementation of the survey process. Qadri emphasized the importance of

conducting genuine and transparent surveys to accurately reflect the eligible beneficiaries. Furthermore, he said that the list will be

made public to allow citizens to submit objections, provide inputs, and raise concerns thereby maintaining public trust in the system.

The meeting was attended by ACR Bandipora, ACD Bandipora, CPO, AD Food Civil Supplies and Consumer Affairs, DSWO Bandipora, Tehsildar Bandipora, Block Development Officers, CDPO Bandipora and other Concerned. SDM Gurez, SDM Sumbal, Tehsildar Sumbal, Tehsildar Hajin and Tehsildar Tulail attended the meeting virtually. He also urged Tehsildar Bandipora to closely monitor the mobilization efforts, ensure coordination, and facilitate smooth implementation of the survey process.

Qadri emphasized the importance of conducting genuine and transparent surveys to accurately reflect the eligible beneficiaries.

Furthermore, he said that the list will be made public to allow citizens to submit objections, provide inputs, and raise concerns thereby maintaining public trust in the system.

EDITORIAL

Make Jal Jeevan Mission meaningful in real sense

Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM), a flagship programme launched by the Government of India some years back was aimed to provide clean drinking water to the people of India. The scheme might have achieved its target of reaching out to the people since tap water connections have been provided to the people living in the far-flung areas of the country, but on the other hand people continue to suffer.

Reports of water shortage come from different parts of the Kashmir valley every now and then. Over the years the Jal Shakti department has failed to upgrade the system and as a result of this there has been no improvement in the overall water supply. It is due to this reason that a slight increase in the day temperature leads to shortage of the drinking water across the length and breadth of the valley. Failure to upgrade the existing system and above all the failure to introduce new water supply schemes has compounded the problems of the people.

The basic problem is that the planners here have a limited vision and they don't look towards the future. They are concerned about the present day and seem to be least bothered about the future. Ideally the people at helm should have a vision and they should formulate a scheme that can run for decades together. Once this happens the coming generations will not suffer on account of clean drinking water. As on date the people are suffering and one does not know when the things will change.

It is important that the Jal Shakti department upgrades the existing infrastructure so that the people are not up against multiple problems during the coming summer season. The rusted pipes need to be replaced by fresh ones and that too with a higher diameter. At the same time proper cleaning of the water supply schemes needs to be done so that clean and drinking water is supplied to the people.

The department needs to pull up the socks and make a proper stock of chlorine and other chemicals that are needed to make water free from all the impurities. It has been observed that during rains dirty and filthy water is supplied to the people and as such people fall prey to different water borne diseases. This needs to be looked into by the people at helm so that the masses are entitled to clean and drinking water.

Preparing For Ramadan 2025: A Holistic Guide To Physical And Spiritual Readiness

FIRDOUS AHMAD MALIK

As the crescent moon signals the arrival of Ramadan, millions of Muslims around the world prepare to embrace the sacred month with reverence, devotion, and anticipation. Ramadan is not only a time of fasting, but a period of deep spiritual reflection, self-discipline, and renewal. It is a month of unparalleled blessings, where the soul finds tranquillity in the remembrance of Allah, and the heart grows closer to His mercy.

Fasting during Ramadan is a transformative experience—physically, mentally, and spiritually. It teaches patience, empathy, and gratitude as we abstain from food, drink, and worldly distractions. Beyond the physical act of fasting, Ramadan calls us to purify our hearts, strengthen our faith, and deepen our connection with Allah. The Qur'an, the divine revelation, was sent down during this blessed month, and it is a time for Muslims to read, reflect, and immerse themselves in the guidance of Allah.

In this holistic guide, we explore the essential steps to prepare for Ramadan—physically, emotionally, and spiritually.

By setting clear intentions and approaching the month with mindfulness, we can make the most of this precious opportunity for growth, reflection, and closeness to Allah. May this Ramadan bring peace, blessings, and a renewed sense of purpose to all.

As Ramadan approaches, it is crucial to prepare the body for the physical demands of fasting. Adjusting eating habits beforehand can help ease the transition. Start by gradually reducing your intake of heavy, processed foods and focusing on nutrient-rich meals. Incorporating fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and lean proteins can provide sustained energy throughout the day, helping your body adapt to the fasting schedule.

A key part of physical preparation is developing a balanced suhoor (pre-dawn meal) and iftar (meal to break the fast) plan. For suhoor, choose foods with a low glycemic index, such as oats, whole wheat bread, and healthy fats like avocado, which help maintain energy levels for longer periods. For iftar, begin with dates and water to rehydrate and restore glucose levels, followed by a light, well-balanced meal that includes

proteins, complex carbs, and vegetables for nourishment.

Improving sleep patterns is another vital aspect of preparation. Try to gradually adjust your sleeping schedule so that you get sufficient rest during the night, even if you wake for suhoor. This will help maintain your energy levels throughout the day. Building stamina through light physical activity, like walking or stretching, can help your body adapt to the new routine, enhancing overall strength and endurance for the fast.

As Ramadan approaches, spiritual preparation is key to making the most of this sacred month. Strengthening the soul begins with increasing acts of worship in the weeks leading up to Ramadan. Start by performing extra prayers (Nafl), engaging in recitation of the Qur'an, and seeking closeness to Allah through remembrance (dhikr). These acts help create a heightened spiritual awareness, preparing the heart for the intensified devotion that Ramadan calls for.

Seeking forgiveness and purification is another important step. Use these days to repent sincerely for past mistakes and seek Allah's mercy, as Ramadan

is a time when His forgiveness is abundant. Purify your heart by letting go of negative emotions like anger, envy, and pride, which can hinder your spiritual progress.

Charity is at the heart of Ramadan, and giving in charity—whether through Sadaqah (voluntary charity) or Zakat (obligatory alms)—purifies both wealth and soul. Make a habit of giving to those in need, and remember that even small acts of kindness are rewarded abundantly during this blessed month.

Ramadan is a month of self-discipline. Cultivate control over your desires, be it in food, speech, or actions. Developing self-discipline now will help you remain focused and patient as you embark on the fast, bringing you closer to spiritual renewal and growth.

For today's youth, Ramadan presents both a challenge and an opportunity to reconnect with faith in an increasingly fast-paced world. As we prepare for this sacred month, it's important to approach it with readiness—physically, mentally and spiritually—while adapting to the realities of modern life. The distractions of technology, social media, and hectic schedules

can make it easy to lose focus, but Ramadan offers a chance to pause, reflect, and realign our priorities with Allah's guidance.

Modern youth can embrace Ramadan with devotion by setting personal intentions for growth. This might mean dedicating time to meaningful acts of worship, such as prayer, Qur'an recitation, and self-reflection while being mindful of the importance of social responsibility through charity and community involvement. Embrace Ramadan as a chance to unplug from the noise of daily life and focus on inner peace and spiritual renewal.

In this modern age, Ramadan can serve as a powerful reminder of balance, self-discipline, and gratitude. It's not only about fasting from food but also about negativity, bad habits, and distractions. By approaching Ramadan with sincerity and commitment, today's youth can emerge stronger, more compassionate, and spiritually fulfilled, ready to make lasting positive changes in their lives and the world around them.

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Tomul Tchatun: Our Lost Tradition

MANZOOR AKASH

Kashmir, besides its breathtaking natural beauty, is also a home to rich cultural heritage and vibrant traditions that define region's brotherhood and community. The unique traditions, and customs of the land that were a cornerstone once, fostered not only a sense of unity, love, tolerance and mutual respect but also the most significant aspect of Kashmiriyat. But, unfortunately, these worth-preserving traditions that reflected the spirit of unity and generosity seem to have faded into obscurity. Being in touch with one's roots is considered awkward in the present times. The rich traditions that contributed to the tapestry of our cultural legacy, and promoted a sense of unity among us, is all forgotten.

Gone are the days when weddings in Kashmir strengthened the very bond of brotherhood, resilience and affection

by bringing neighbors, relatives and friends close to one another! Devoid of any pomp and show, comparison, competition, envy or jealousy, etc. those marriages served a strong bond, not just to unite two souls, two families but brought together kith and kin for preparations.

Be it any occasion, well-wishers, warmly, stepped in and showed their participation in true spirit. Amongst many pre-wedding preparations, there existed a time-honored practice that refuses to be simply forgotten, called Tomul Tchatun, a deep-rooted ritual wherein women from neighborhood warmly participated to clear the quintals of rice of all kinds of impurities through winnowing and handpicking. Swallowed by the clamors of modernity, this distinctive cultural legacy which is on the brink of extinction, craves for its renewal.

As I delve deep into the realms of past, I fondly recall, how pre-wedding

participation of Tomul Tchatun, spread good vibes out in the vicinity regarding someone's Khander (wedding). The traditional practice of rice winnowing where women used flat-baskets or wired planks made of willow sticks, locally called Shupp, to separate the rice grains from the chaff by tossing them in the air. The breeze carried away the lighter chaff while the grain fell back into the Shupp. But alas! The days have slipped in the haze of time, leaving mere memories in an age where convenience triumphs tradition.

At the heart of the clandestine tradition, the women from neighboring households would sit in the lawn of either Gober Moul or Kouri Moul (groom or bride's parents) few days ahead of wedding, along with their own Shuppe (plural), just to make the event of Tomul Tchatun memorable as the tradition embodied the spirit of community and togeth-

erness. Additionally, the women brought along packets of candies and showered them on the Izmand or Izmand Baye (bride/groom's parents) in the start, to express their joy and love. They would also sit together in a circle, usually on the matting outside for it and sip a cup of traditional saffron Kahwa before the winnowing actually began. After that they would go on tossing the rice in their Shuppe and sang mellifluous customary songs simultaneously to spread happiness around.

The roots of timeless Tomul Tchatun tradition run deep, sustaining not just our brotherhood but the very essence of Kashmiri identity. Though I can't recall every song, they sang. Yet, frequently, they would go with: 'Bismillah Kareth Tomul Tchatayye, Issme Aazum Paraaye; Tomul Tchatayye Raj Saend Undrai, Chundro Karyo Vaavij Vaav'....loosely translated as (Let's start winnowing

rice with Allah's name, the bearer of all good names; As we're winnowing rice in a prince's house, let's not overlook to show our love for him). Those elderly women prolonged their strains to let others hear what they actually meant like 'Tomul Tchatayye Vaarai Vaarai, Dil Kararai Thaeyze', a hint to bride/groom's parents.

Ironically! The age-old practice of Tomul Tchatun is least practiced in contemporary Kashmiri weddings except in certain far-off villages where it is still in vogue. No doubt, modern-day marriages have evolved into a flourishing industry, but when they are juxtaposed against those of past, they fall short to preserve our cultural values. I vividly remember, how delicacies were cooked by the Waza (chef) for the women who participated in the Tomul Tchatun ritual. Not to talk of the towns, the custom, least prevalent even in villages, is reduced to the relic of a bygone era as the shadows of moder-

nity looms large, casting doubt on the revival of once-thriving tradition.

It merits a mention here that Tomul Tchatun was also practiced in autumn season and on the onset of winter in Kashmir after thrashing and drying of (paddy) corn was over. However, this habit too has confined to either machines or to self-cleaning at home.

To conclude, it is heartening to lose sight of our roots and once-flourished traditions that defined us. Through collective efforts, we can safeguard this valuable cultural treasure & symbol of community, deeply-rooted in our culture for generation Z.

May this humble write-up serve as an endeavor to preserve plus revitalize this age-old tradition of Tomul Tchatun, and be alive in memories and practice, passing on the richness of cultural wisdom to those who come after us. manzurakash@yahoo.co.in

Brains Behind Bars :The Broken Promises of Education

NAWAZZ IBN AHAD

In the tranquil of hinterlands of arcadian and rural areas, where yearnings and aspirations once soared like free birds, a grim reality now clips their wings. The brood and erudite youth in villages, armed with degrees earned through years of sweat and swelter and forego and sacrifice, now find themselves staring into a void where fortuity and opportunities are as scarce as rain in a drought. The dream of securing a stable livelihood has crumbled like a sandcastle against the tides of economic stagnation and tightens its grip like a relentless tide, washing away all expectations. With every passing day, their backs bend under the burden of uncertainty, their once-radiant faces now pale yellow, as if they have already touched the frantic and deathbed of their ambitions. The fire in their eyes, once brimming with the reflec-

tion of bright possibilities, has dimmed. These very eyes, once vast as oceans where dreams set sail like mighty ships, are now barren landscapes, dried by the harsh winds of joblessness. The waves of hope that once danced in their gaze have receded, leaving behind an endless stretch of emptiness.

Now, hopelessness is tightening its grip like a vice, pushing many into dementia-like states where their thoughts scatter like autumn leaves caught in an endless whirl of uncertainty. Parents who once beamed with pride at their children's academic success now sigh in disappointment and chagrin as they watch their highly educated sons and daughters struggle to make ends meet. The cycle is merciless—dreams are nurtured, knowledge is gained, sacrifices are made, yet in the end, all roads lead to a dead end. Those who were meant to lead classrooms, offices, and insti-

tutions now roam the streets, their qualifications reduced to mere words on paper. Some, in desperation, migrate to cities where they are met with rejection, while others remain in their villages, forced to trade their education for menial labor just to survive. What was once seen as the pathway to progress has now become a road leading nowhere. The frustration of jobless graduates in villages is more than just an economic setback—it is an emotional and social disaster. Years of hard work and sacrifice seem to be going down the drain, leaving young minds restless and disheartened. As days turn into years of unemployment, the spark in their eyes is slowly fading. Now, with sunken cheeks and weary expressions, they roam their villages with yellowed faces, their once-bright hopes dimmed like lanterns flickering in the wind. The weight of disappointment bends their backs, while their

tear-filled eyes, turned toward the sky, glisten like diamonds resting on the soft petals of a leaf—silent yet speaking of the anguish buried deep within.

What is left for them? A life of uncertainty. A future that fades before it even begins. The realization that they have been deceived—sold the dream of education without a bridge to employment. Their tears fall silently, like diamonds slipping from the edges of a leaf, unnoticed in the vast indifference of a system that continues to fail them. With industries keeping their distance from rural landscapes and government schemes failing to hit the mark, these bright minds are left to wander in circles of uncertainty. Once the torchbearers of knowledge, they now find themselves stuck between a rock and a hard place—either packing their bags for overcrowded cities or rolling up their sleeves for menial work that barely keeps the pot boil-

ing. For village youth, unemployment is more than just an economic hurdle—it is a storm that sweeps away confidence and self-worth. The education system, which once appeared as a golden ladder, now feels like a mirage in a desert of hopelessness. Degrees that were once a badge of honor have become nothing more than framed pieces of paper gathering dust on walls, mocking their holders who find no doors opening for them. With no industries knocking on the doors of rural areas and job opportunities playing hide-and-seek, the youth find themselves running from pillar to post. Many, unable to make ends meet, are left with no choice but to switch lanes—from academics to manual labor, from classrooms to construction sites, from dreams of white-collar jobs to the harsh reality of blue-collar survival. Once the pride of their families and communities, educated youth

in villages now find themselves at a dead end. The knowledge that once promised them a better future has turned into an unbearable burden. Instead of wielding pens in university halls, they are now wielding tools in labor markets. The same degrees that once held the promise of a prestigious career now hang around their necks like shackles, pulling them into the abyss of frustration. The recent viral video of PhD scholars pushing wagons of the carts instead of delivering lectures as assistant professors is a brutal eye-opener. It paints a harsh picture of a system that has turned a blind eye to its brightest minds. This stark transformation—from the heights of academia to the depths of survival jobs—is a living testament to the deep cracks in employment policies that have failed to translate education into opportunities. The harsh truth is that rural areas are sitting on a

ticking time bomb of unfulfilled dreams and wasted potential. If concrete steps are not taken soon, villages will continue to witness the tragic transformation of scholars into laborers, of knowledge into neglect, and of ambition into agony. Without urgent intervention, rural areas will continue to bleed talent, as its educated youth either migrate in search of opportunities or resign themselves to fate. The government must hit the ground running—investing in rural employment schemes, incentivizing industries to set up base in villages, and bridging the gap between education and employability. If the wheels of change do not start turning now, the cycle of despair will only tighten its grip, burying another generation of educated youth under the weight of broken promises and lost hopes. The time for lip service is over—action is the need of the hour.

Blessings of Ramadan: The Month of Divine Mercy and Revelation



ANAYATULLAH NAJAR
ACHAN PULWAMA

Ramadan is not just a month of fasting and spiritual devotion but holds a far greater significance in Islam. It is the month in which the greatest blessing to humanity—the Qur'an—was revealed. Allah (SWT) states in the Qur'an:

"The month of Ramadan in which was revealed the Qur'an..." (Surah Al-Baqarah 2:185)

This divine revelation,

narrated:

"Whoever fasts during Ramadan with faith and seeking reward from Allah, all his past sins will be forgiven."

(Sahih al-Bukhari 38, Sahih Muslim 760)

3. Laylatul Qadr as a Means of Salvation:

The Prophet (PBUH) also said:

"Whoever stands in prayer on the Night of Qadr with faith and seeking reward, his past sins will be forgiven."

(Sahih al-Bukhari 1901, Sahih Muslim 760)

These Hadith highlight that Ramadan is not just about fasting but a means of spiritual purification and earning Allah's infinite mercy.

Ramadan: A Blueprint for Human Guidance

The Qur'an describes



which began in Ramadan, transformed human history by providing ultimate guidance, justice, and light to the world. The importance of Ramadan is directly linked to this momentous event.

The Night of Power: A Blessing Beyond Time

Further reinforcing this divine connection, the Qur'an confirms that the first revelation occurred during one of the last ten nights of Ramadan, known as Laylatul Qadr (The Night of Power):

"Indeed, We sent the Qur'an down during the Night of Decree (Laylatul Qadr)." (Surah Al-Qadr 97:1)

The same Surah highlights the extraordinary blessings of this night:

"The Night of Decree is better than a thousand months." (Surah Al-Qadr 97:3)

Many interpret this verse to mean that the acts of worship performed on this night surpass the rewards of worship done for 1,000 months (approximately 84 years). However, a deeper understanding reveals that the true significance of Laylatul Qadr lies in the grand plan of Allah—the revelation of the Qur'an. This divine guidance is a mercy that surpasses the blessings of any number of nights combined.

Prophetic Sayings on Ramadan's Virtues

The importance of Ramadan is further emphasized in authentic Hadith collections. The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) described Ramadan as a month of mercy, forgiveness, and freedom from Hellfire.

1. The Gates of Mercy Opened:

Abu Huraira (RA) reported: The Messenger of Allah (PBUH) said:

"When Ramadan begins, the gates of Paradise are opened, the gates of Hellfire are closed, and the devils are chained." (Sahih al-Bukhari 1899, Sahih Muslim 1079)

2. Forgiveness of Sins:

Abu Huraira (RA) also

itself as "a guidance for all of humanity" (Surah Al-Baqarah 2:185). This means that the significance of Laylatul Qadr is not limited to one night's worship, but to the timeless wisdom and justice that the Qur'an offers.

The Qur'an's teachings have provided answers to humanity's greatest dilemmas—from social justice to spiritual fulfillment, from personal morality to governance. The revelation of such a divine book in Ramadan is what truly makes this month blessed.

The real question is not whether one night's deeds surpass those of a thousand months, but rather, how much more valuable is the Qur'an compared to anything humanity could accomplish in a thousand months? The Qur'an is not just a book of worship but a guide to peace, justice, and success in this life and the Hereafter.

Conclusion: Embracing the True Blessings of Ramadan

Ramadan is a month of immense spiritual opportunity. It is not just about fasting but about reconnecting with the Qur'an, reflecting on its message, and implementing its guidance in our lives. The blessings of this month culminate in Laylatul Qadr—a night that changed the course of history through the revelation of divine knowledge.

As we fast, pray, and seek forgiveness in Ramadan, let us also dedicate ourselves to understanding and applying the teachings of the Qur'an. Only then can we truly benefit from the blessings of this sacred month and experience the mercy, guidance, and peace that Allah has bestowed upon us through His final revelation.

May Allah grant us the ability to make the most of Ramadan, accept our prayers, and allow us to live by the Qur'an's guidance. Ameen.

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SAMEER AHMAD KHAN

Social media has transformed the way people communicate and access information, including religious teachings. Religious preachers, particularly those from the Islamic tradition, have increasingly turned to platforms like YouTube, Facebook, Twitter, and TikTok to reach wider audiences. Ideally, these platforms should be used to promote peace, understanding, and Islamic values. However, many preachers engage in unnecessary debates over issues that hold little significance in Islam, often creating division, confusion, and even hatred among different sects and social groups.

Rather than focusing on the core teachings of Islam—such as justice, compassion, unity, and social responsibility—many preachers use social media to argue over minor theological and jurisprudential issues. These debates not only confuse the public but also deepen sectarian rifts, weaken Muslim solidarity, and sometimes even incite hatred and violence.

Prophet Muhammad's (PBUH)

Message: Wisdom, Unity and Good Conduct

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) brought a message of peace, unity, and wisdom. His teachings emphasized kindness, tolerance, and brotherhood among Muslims, regardless of their backgrounds. However, the way many religious preachers behave on social media today stands in stark contrast to his example.

The Prophet (PBUH) Called for Unity, Not Division

One of the core teachings of Islam is unity. The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) repeatedly emphasized the importance of standing together as one Ummah.

"The believers are but brothers, so make peace between your brothers and fear Allah that you may receive mercy." (Surah Al-Hujurat 49:10)

"Do not hate each other, and do not be jealous of each other, and do not desert (cut relations with) each other. O Allah's worshippers! Be brothers!" (Sahih al-Bukhari, 6065)

Despite this clear message, many online preachers focus on what divides Muslims rather than what unites them. They engage in sectarian debates and attack others based on minor differences, contradicting the Prophet's (PBUH) call for brotherhood.

The Prophet (PBUH) Taught Good Manners and Respectful Dialogue

The Enduring Legacy Of Moulana Anwar Shopiani: A Champion Of Tawheed In Kashmir

BABAR UL ASLAM

Moulana Anwar Shopiani was not only a preacher but also a prolific poet and writer. His works, written in Persian and Kashmiri, include Dewan-e-Anwar, Taleem-e-Sunnat, and Guldaste-Anwari, which continue to be celebrated for their religious and literary value.

In Kashmir Valley, the legacy of Moulana Anwar Shopiani stands as a beacon of the propagation of Tawheed (the Oneness of Allah). Born in 1849 in south Kashmir's Shopian district, Moulana Anwar was not just a scholar, but a revolutionary figure who dedicated his life to the purification of Islamic practices in the region. His teachings and works continue to inspire generations, reminding us of the importance of returning to the Quran and Sunnah.

After receiving his early



The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) was known for his patience, wisdom, and respectful way of addressing others. Even when he disagreed with someone, he never resorted to harsh language, insults, or public humiliation.

"The best among you are those who have the best manners and character." (Sahih al-Bukhari, 3559)

"A true Muslim is the one from whose tongue and hands others are safe." (Sunan al-Nasa'i, 4998)

Today, many religious preachers use social media as a battleground, engaging in arguments, name-calling, and personal attacks. This behaviour is completely against the Prophet's (PBUH) teachings of kindness and respectful dialogue.

The Prophet (PBUH) Focused on Important Issues, Not Trivial Debates

The Prophet (PBUH) never wasted time arguing over minor details. Instead, he focused on guiding people toward righteousness, and justice, and worshipping Allah sincerely.

A man once asked the Prophet (PBUH) about minor details of religion. The Prophet (PBUH) replied: "Allah has made certain things obligatory, so do not neglect them; He has set limits, so do not overstep them; and He has kept silent about some things, as a mercy to you, not out of forgetfulness—so do not seek after them." (Sunan al-Daraqutni, 4/184)

HT-OPED

This Hadith teaches that Islam is not about unnecessary debates on minor matters. However, many preachers today focus on trivial issues—such as how someone dresses, slight differences in prayer, or personal opinions—while ignoring larger issues like justice, economic fairness, and moral development.

The Prophet (PBUH) Warned Against Creating Hatred and Disunity

The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) warned against division and conflict among Muslims. He knew that arguments and hatred would weaken the community and cause harm.

"The most hated person in the sight of Allah is the most quarrelsome." (Sahih al-Bukhari, 2457)

"Do not engage in unnecessary disputes, for indeed, disputing over religion leads to destruction." (Sunan Ibn Majah, 48)

Despite this warning, many preachers today use social media to argue over religious matters in a way that causes division and hatred rather than guidance and wisdom.

The Rise of Online Religious Debates

With the rapid growth of digital platforms, religious discussions have moved from mosques and seminaries to online spaces. While this shift offers new opportunities for learning, it has also introduced serious problems, including:

Sensationalism Over Substance

Many preachers prioritize controversial topics to attract more views, likes, and followers. Instead of focusing on essential Islamic teachings, they engage in heated debates over trivial matters, such as:

Whether a particular style of clothing is permissible.
The way certain prayers should be performed.

Unnecessary comparisons between different Islamic sects, leading to sectarian conflicts.

This approach shifts attention away from more critical issues that affect the Muslim community, such as poverty, education, moral development, and social justice.

Sectarian Conflicts and Division

One of the most harmful effects of online religious debates is the widening sectarian divide. Preachers from different sects frequently engage in debates, not to seek truth or understanding, but to discredit one another. This has led to:

Increased hostility between different sects and groups.

A rise in online hate speech, which sometimes spills into real-life conflicts.

Young Muslims are being misled into extremist ideologies due to misinformation.

Islam teaches unity and brotherhood, yet social media is being misused to deepen

divisions rather than promote understanding and harmony.

The Need for Responsible Use of Social Media

Religious preachers have a moral responsibility to use social media wisely. Instead of using their platforms for division, they should:

Promote Unity and Brotherhood

Focus on shared Islamic beliefs rather than sectarian differences.

Encourage respectful dialogue and understanding between different schools of thought.

Spread messages of peace, tolerance, and cooperation.

Address Real Issues Facing the Muslim World

Discuss social justice, education, poverty alleviation, and moral development.

Provide guidance on contemporary challenges such as technology, mental health, and global conflicts.

Encourage personal and community growth through Islamic ethics and values.

Educate with Wisdom and Authentic Knowledge

Base teachings on authentic Islamic sources rather than personal opinions.

Avoid sensationalist and divisive rhetoric for the sake of popularity.

Encourage critical thinking and respectful discussions among followers.

Conclusion

Social media has immense potential to spread Islamic knowledge and foster unity, but its misuse by some religious preachers has caused confusion, division, and hatred. The focus on trivial matters, sectarian disputes, and sensationalism has distracted the Muslim community from more important issues. It is time for religious leaders to use their influence responsibly, promoting peace, knowledge, and unity rather than discord.

The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) emphasized wisdom, patience, and understanding in spreading Islam. Suppose preachers truly wish to serve their communities. In that case, they must move away from unnecessary debates and focus on uplifting and educating their followers in a way that aligns with the true spirit of Islam.

By following the example of the Prophet (PBUH), religious preachers can transform social media into a tool for guidance, unity, and positive change rather than a platform for division and conflict.

khansameerpolitical@gmail.com

DY CM emphasizes need to undertake philanthropic activities to serve mankind

Attends 29th Foundation Day of Chandi Mata Mandir, Pacca Danga

HT News Network

JAMMU, MARCH 01: While highlighting the need for undertaking philanthropic activities, Deputy Chief Minister, Surinder Choudhary, today said that it is necessary to serve the mankind and provide equal opportunities in life to all.

The Deputy Chief Minister was speaking at a function organized to commemorate the 29th Foundation Day of Chandi Mata Mandir at Pacca Danga organized by Shri Chandi

Mata Trust, Jammu. The Deputy Chief Minister said that the real devotion to God is to serve humanity and we should collectively work for undertaking activities which would be beneficial to the people at large. "Our endeavor should be to work for upliftment of down-trodden and weaker sections of society. We should also channelize our activities for providing ample opportunities of education, housing and related things to marginalized sections of the society, which would be the real offering to the Almighty," the Dep-



uty Chief Minister emphasized. While speaking about the challenges being faced by the society, the Deputy Chief Minister said that the present society is marred by various social evils and the need of the hour is to collectively work for their eradication. He said that the people should rise to the occasion and work for creating a civilized and a well-meaning social order.

Appealing to the youth to contribute their bit in creating a social order free of social evils, the Deputy Chief Minister said that they should not

fall prey to substance abuse. He exhorted upon the young generation to follow the teachings of Saints and Seers for spiritual and intellectual upliftment. The Deputy Chief Minister said that the government has launched a comprehensive campaign for making Jammu and Kashmir a drug free region. He said that the issue of drug abuse has already been taken up with the law enforcing agencies for its eradication from society. Earlier, the Deputy Chief Minister inaugurated a free medical camp organized by Amar Shaheed.

Deputy Chief Minister felicitates Bronze medalist, Rajat Singh

HT News Network

JAMMU, MARCH 01: Deputy Chief Minister, Surinder Choudhary, today felicitated Rajat Singh Chib, Bronze medalist in Judo event at the 38th National Games held recently in Dehradun, Uttarakhand.

While interacting with the sports person, the Deputy Chief Minister said that the government has undertaken a comprehensive mechanism for giving a fillip to the sports related activities and the requisite infrastructure as well. He said that sports activities are imperative for overall



development of person with intellectual capabilities and calibre.

The Deputy Chief Minister said that several sports persons have brought laurels to Jammu and Kashmir by winning at National and

International level competitions. "It is a matter of pride for Jammu and Kashmir that our young sportspersons are creating a niche for themselves and we would ensure that they are provided with all req-

uisite assistance and help", he added.

Pertinently, Rajat Singh Chib, a resident of Hunjana Nowshera in Rajouri district, has won the Bronze medal in the event after a long gap of 35 years in the Men's category. The Deputy Chief Minister said that several sports persons have brought laurels to Jammu and Kashmir by winning at National and International level competitions. "It is a matter of pride for Jammu and Kashmir that our young sportspersons are creating a niche for themselves and we would ensure that they are provided with all requisite.

Union Minister JP Nadda offers prayers at Vaishno Devi Shrine

HT News Network

Katra, March 1: Shri JP Nadda, Hon'ble Union Minister for Health, Chemicals and Fertilizers, Government of India visited the Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine and paid obeisance at the sanctum sanctorum. He was accompanied by Dr. Jitendra Singh, Hon'ble Minister of State for S & T and Earth Sciences. Upon their arrival at Katra, the base camp of the Shrine, the dignitaries were received by Shri Anshul Garg, Chief Executive Officer, Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board.

The CEO briefed the Union Ministers about the various initiatives undertaken by the Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board, under the chairmanship of Hon'ble Lieutenant Governor, JK-UT, Shri Manoj Sinha, including the upcoming Medical College



being set up at Kakryal. The CEO highlighted the Board's efforts to upgrade and expand the existing infrastructure with the aim of providing enhanced facilities and services to the ever-increasing number of pilgrims visiting the Holy Shrine.

Shri JP Nadda expressed his deep

appreciation for the endeavors of the Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board aimed at facilitating the journey and holy Darshans of the pilgrims. He commended the Board's commitment to ensuring a smooth, safe and spiritual experience for all devotees visiting the Shrine.

Maha Shivratri celebrations. Entire Jammu region immersed in devotion of Lord Shiva: Rattan Lal Gupta

Reaffirms NC's pledge to protect pluralistic ethos of Jammu and Kashmir

HT News Network

Jammu, March 1: Adv. Rattan Lal Gupta, Provincial President of Jammu and Kashmir National Conference (JKNC), today lauded the profound spiritual devotion witnessed across the Jammu region during the ongoing Maha Shivratri celebrations. Describing the atmosphere as imbued with the divine grace of Bhagwan Shiva, he praised the unwavering faith of the people, which has transformed the entire region into a hub of religious fervor.



He expressed these sentiments while participating in a Bhandara organized by Jia Lal Gupta AEE Rtd and his team from Greater Khailash and Mr Vijay Lochan Chairman SC Cell and Mr Rakesh Singh Raka Vice

President Central Zone were also participated in connection with Maha Shivratri at Greater Kailash Bypass area in Jammu. The event saw an overwhelming turnout of devotees, who thronged the venue to seek blessings and partake in the communal spirit of the festival.

The senior NC leader highlighted that such gatherings symbolize the unity

and spiritual richness of Jammu, showcasing the people's deep-rooted adherence to Sanatan Dharma.

"Since the commencement of Maha Shivratri, the celebrations have been marked by devotion and enthusiasm across the Jammu region. Temples are resonating with chants of 'Har Har Mahadev' and the devotion displayed by the people is truly commendable," he stated.

The Provincial President also emphasized the significance of preserving the cultural and religious heritage of the region. He called upon the people to actively participate in such festivals to strengthen their bond with the age-old traditions of J&K.

Govt of Jammu & Kashmir Office of the Child Development Project Officer Poshan Achabal

After finalization of General Merit panel and Tentative selection list of candidates who have applied for the posts of Sanginis advertised by this office vide advertisement Notice No 59 of 2024 Dated:- 29-02-2024 under endorsement No: CDPO/Ach./853-862 Dated:- 29-02-2024 and this office published the said General Merit List of all candidates and Tentative selection list of Top meritorious candidates through department of information Vide DIPK-150839 and vide publicity was also given through Sarpanches and through Social Media for calling of objections from general public/Desirous candidates. In response to it this office has received only one Objections from one candidate Namely Tabasum Jan D/O Mohd Jabbar Lone R/O. Mirgund Anantnag The complainant is claiming that Tentatively selected Candidate that is Adfar Jan has completed PG from Kashmir University (Copy Enclosed). Therefore candidature of Adfar Jan stands cancelled as she is having masters Degree. The general academic merit panel of the candidate of the above location is mentioned below at Annexure-A and separately across the file also with separate list of Top Meritorious candidates/Provisionally/Tentatively selected candidates at Annexure-B with all relevant details is hereby submitted before the selection committee constituted vide Government Order No: 222-JK(SWD) Dated:30-11-2022 for finalizing the selection process of Sanginis (AAWs), if found correct may be approved and General merit and provisional cum Tentative list of top meritorious candidate will be published by the CDPO Achabal (Member Secretary) accordingly.

S No.	Name of Condidate	Parentage/W/O	DOB	AWC for which selected Provisionally/Tentatively	Qualific ation	Max Marks as per 12 Class	Marks Obtained as per 12 Class	% of Marks
01	Tabasum Jan	D/O Mohd Jabbar Lone		Mirgund A	TDC	750	345	46%

DIPK-12552/24
Date: Mar 1 2025

District Programme Officer
Poshan Project Anantnag

UNION TERRITORY OF JAMMU & KASHMIR JAL SHAKTI DEPARTMENT OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER FBI DIVISION TANGMARG

M/S Wani Construction
Prop.: Mubeena Akhter
R/O. Gulab Bagh Reram Tangmarg
Regd. No.: SE(R&B)SB/2517/BEE of 2018-19.

No.: FBID/ 7637-40
Dated:- 28/02/2025

FINAL NOTICE

Sub:- Letter of Intent for "Rejuvenation of Masjid Ahlihadees Spring (Balance work) at Kunzer".

Ref.:1. This Office LOI no.: FBI/DB/6529-32, Dated:- 14-01-2025.

2 This office E-NIT No.: 20 of 2024-25 Issued vide endorsement No.: FBID/CC/6230-55, Dated:- 03-01-2025.

3 This office 1st notice No.: FBID/7112-15, Dated:- 06-02-2025.

4 This office 2nd notice No.: FBID/1256, Dated:- 20-02-2025.

5 Assistant Executive Engineer Tail Race Sub Divisions Notice no.: TRK/ 1178-79, Dated:-29-01-2025 and 2nd Notice no.: TRK/1216-17, Dated:- 13-02-2025.

6 Assistant Executive Engineer Tail Race Sub Division Kunzer's No.: TRK/1256, Dated:- 20-02-2025.

Whereas the above cited work was advertised under AMRUT 2.0 vide this office e-NIT cited above, and subsequently LOI has been issued to you vide LOI No. referred above at S.No. 01.

Whereas, you were several times informed through the above notices to start the execution of work, but you have turned deaf ears towards the instructions for no valid reasons which speaks of your non-seriousness and disobedience to the contract stipulation. Whereas, as per the LOI, you were supposed to mobilize men and machinery immediately to the site within 02 days from the issuance of the LOI. But till date no activity has been started by you at site.

In view of above you are hereby through medium of this final notice directed to start the work and gear-up for speedy completion of the work within 03 days positively, failing which action as warranted as per the contract stipulations for delaying the execution of work will be initiated against you.

DIPK-12533/24
Date: March 1, 2025

Sd/
Executive Engineer
FBI Division Tangmarg.

PUBLIC NOTICE

I have changed my name from (Khan Masrat Nabi) to (Masrat Nabi). In future I will be known as (Masrat Nabi) D/O Gh. Nabi Khan R/O Haihama Bonagam, District Kupwara. if any body is having any objection he/she may contact Passport Office, Srinagar with in 7 days. After 7 days no objection will be accepted.

GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU & KASHMIR OFFICE OF THE TEHSILDAR KHOIE (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 Sangrama) / chokedar has submitted case file pertaining to Birth of MOHAMMAD NUMAN SHEIKH S/O FAYAZ AHMAD SHEIKH R/O VIZER Tehsil WAGOORA Distt. Baramulla having verified the date of Birth as 08/01/2021 and event has been shown to be occurred at SDH KREERI for issuance of delay order. In this connection . if anyone have any objection to the issuance of delay order of Birth certificate shall present his/her claim this office within 07 days, after that no objection shall be entertained.

Executive Magistrate
1st Class KHOIE

GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU & KASHMIR OFFICE OF THE TEHSILDAR KHOIE (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 Sangrama) / chokedar has submitted case file pertaining to Birth of SAJAD AHMAD MIR S/O ABDULAHAD MIR R/O HANDKOTE Tehsil KREERI Distt. Baramulla having verified the date of Birth as 10/05/1990 and event has been shown to be occurred at HOME for issuance of delay order. In this connection . if anyone have any objection to the issuance of delay order of Birth certificate shall present his/her claim this office within 07 days, after that no objection shall be entertained

Executive Magistrate
1st Class KHOIE

GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU & KASHMIR OFFICE OF THE TEHSILDAR KHOIE (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 Sangrama) / chokedar has submitted case file pertaining to Birth of MOHAMMAD IBRAHIM SHEIKH S/O WASEEM AKRUM SHEIKH R/O PALHALLAN Tehsil PATTAN Distt. Baramulla having verified the date of Birth as 23/11/2022 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 KHOIE

Justice Javed Iqbal Wani visits Ganderbal; reviews Judiciary Infrastructure, Court functioning

■ **HT News Network**

GANDERBAL, MARCH 01: Justice Javed Iqbal Wani, Judge High Court of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh and Administrative Judge for District Ganderbal, visited the District Court Complex Ganderbal today to assess the judicial infrastructure and review the functioning of the courts.

Upon arrival, Justice Wani was warmly welcomed by Abdul Nasir, Principal District & Session Judge Ganderbal; Jatin Kishore, Deputy Commissioner Ganderbal and Judicial Officers of District Headquarter Gan-

derbal. Upon his arrival, Justice Wani was accorded a guard of honor by the District Police Ganderbal.

During the visit, Justice Wani chaired a meeting with the District Bar Association Ganderbal. The meeting was attended by Principal District and Sessions Judge Ganderbal, Abdul Nasir, and Deputy Commissioner Ganderbal, Jatin Kishore. The Bar Association representatives highlighted various issues affecting their work, particularly the lack of adequate space.

They requested the construction of prefabricated structures within the court premises for advocates,



along with the provision of an ATM facility.

On this, Justice Wani directed the Deputy Commissioner for preparation of a Detailed Project Report (DPR) for the prefabricated structures, including necessary furniture, on a priority basis.

He emphasized that addressing these infrastructural challenges is crucial for the smooth functioning of the judiciary and the convenience of both advocates and litigants.

He also inspected the judicial work of all courts at the District Headquarter in Ganderbal. He interacted with judicial officers, encouraging them

to perform their duties independently, impartially, and without fear or favour and prioritizing old & targeted cases which are more than five years old for their disposal.

Justice Wani urged judicial officers to work with dedication, honesty, and zeal to uphold the rule of law. He emphasized the importance of maintaining high standards of judicial administration and ensuring timely delivery of justice to the litigants. He emphasized that addressing these infrastructural challenges is crucial for the smooth functioning of the judiciary and the convenience of both advocates and litigants.

DC Kupwara visits various Receiving Stations to inspect Restoration of Power Supply

■ **HT News Network**

KUPWARA, MARCH 1: After recent snowfall across district Kupwara, the Deputy Commissioner (DC) Kupwara, Ms. Ayushi Sudan today visited various receiving stations to inspect the restoration of the power supply by the concerned departments.

During the visit, the Deputy Commissioner inspected Receiving Station (RS) Hirri-Trehgam, RS Kralpora and RS Vilgam. She took detailed stock of all the feeders of these Receiving Stations and directed the concerned officers and field staff to ensure seamless power supply to the people as per the curtailment schedule.

The Deputy Commissioner also took stock of snow clearance efforts car-



ried out by different departments in the district.

Talking to media persons, DC said that Priority-I roads of the district have already been cleared by different departments including R&B, PMGSY,

MED and BEACON and snow clearance efforts are apace on various link roads to ensure hassle free movement of the people especially medical emergencies.

Regarding border roads, the Deputy Commissioner

appealed the commuters to avoid travelling to border areas in view of risk of avalanches. She said that snow clearance operation is going in full swing on the border roads which will be opened soon for the commuters as the weather conditions have improved. She said that District Administration has tied up helicopter service to deal with any medical exigency rising in these snow bound border areas for carrying evacuation operation. She said all the shelter homes are operational to facilitate the stranded passengers of snow bound border areas. Talking to media persons, DC said that Priority-I roads of the district have already been cleared by different departments including R&B, PMGSY, MED and BEACON and snow clearance efforts are apace on various.

Yawar Rasheed KYC : A Shining Example of Humanitarian Service.

■ **REYAZ RABBANI KASHMIRI**

It is truly commendable that even today, many young individuals are dedicating their lives to serving humanity. While some youth are indulging in luxuries, alcoholism, gambling, and drug abuse, there are others, like Yawar Rasheed, who have chosen a different path. As the driving force behind Kashmir Youth Club (KYC), Yawar Rasheed has set a shining example of selflessness and compassion by devoting himself to the welfare of society and humanity. His unwavering commitment, especially towards mentally challenged individuals and homeless elderly people, reflects his noble character and deep sense of social responsibility. In our society, individuals struggling with mental health issues or those who are abandoned often go unnoticed. In such circumstances, Yawar Rasheed has emerged as a beacon of hope, taking it upon himself to provide these neglected individuals with



unconditional care, love, dignity and shelter. His efforts not only demonstrate his immense empathy but also highlight that solving such social issues is a collective responsibility—one that must be embraced by the entire community.

Providing shelter, medical aid, emotional support, and psychological rehabilitation to the elderly and mentally challenged is not merely a service; it is a mission to restore the lost values of humanity. Through Kashmir Youth Club (KYC), Yawar Rasheed has proven that true leadership lies in uplifting others and becoming the voice of those who cannot speak for themselves.

These selfless services deserve not only appreciation but also active support to further this noble mission. May Yawar Rasheed's dedication continue to inspire others, and may he achieve even greater success in expanding his humanitarian work. The people of Kashmir, and indeed the entire human race, owe immense gratitude to Yawar Rasheed for his invaluable contributions. Brave and compassionate youth like him are not only a source of pride for society but also a guiding light for others. It is our duty to encourage and appreciate such enlightened young individuals who strive to make the world a better place.

Police Conducts Awareness Programs on New Criminal Laws in Anantnag

■ **HT News Network**

Anantnag March 01: To enhance public understanding of newly enacted criminal laws, Police in Anantnag organized a series of awareness programs across the district. These sessions, held under the supervision of jurisdictional officers, saw active participation from legal experts, civil society members, and local residents.

The programs focused on key changes in criminal laws, their impact on law enforcement and the public, and the importance of legal compliance for a just and secure society. Officers emphasized the need for awareness to ensure effective law enforcement and safeguard citizens' rights.

Senior Police officers reaffirmed the department's commitment to community-oriented Policing and legal education, encouraging citizens to seek clarifications on new legal provisions when needed.

J&K Police remains dedicated to conducting similar initiatives in the future, fostering transparency and strengthening the bond between law enforcement and the community.

SSP Handwara chairs Crime/ Security review meeting

■ **HT News Network**

Handwara March 01: In order to review the crime/ security scenario of Police District Handwara, SSP Handwara Shri Mushtaq Ahmad Chowdhury-JKPS chaired a meeting at Conference Hall DPO Handwara.

The primary focus of the meeting was on the implementation of new criminal laws, addressing issues related to NDPS, UAPA and assessing the overall security scenario in the Police district. During the meeting, SSP Handwara emphasized the importance of efficient law enforcement, proper investigation procedures and the swift disposal of cases in line with the newly introduced criminal laws. He directed officers to ensure a proactive approach in dealing with drug-related offenses under the NDPS Act and stressed the need for strict action against individuals involved in unlawful activities under the UAPA. Discussions also revolved around enhancing intelligence gathering, strengthening anti-drug initiatives, and improving coordination among different security agencies to ensure a robust security environment in the district. The officers were instructed to maintain heightened vigilance, particularly in sensitive areas, to counter any potential threats to peace and stability. SSP Handwara reiterated that Police remains committed to ensuring the safety and security of the citizens and will take strict legal action against those indulging in criminal activities. He also urged officers to stay updated on legal amendments and ensure that investigations are conducted.

Department of Social Welfare Budgam Conducts Street Plays to Combat Drug Abuse Under Nasha Mukht Bharat Abhiyan

■ **HT News Network**

Badgam/February 28 The District Social Welfare Office Budgam, under the Nasha Mukht Bharat Abhiyan, organized a series of street plays aimed at raising awareness about drug abuse and its detrimental impact on individuals and society. In collaboration with renowned local artists, including Bashir Kotur, Shabeer Hakak, Joziya Mir, and Hilal Khan from Tullkul Arts and Media Collective, the initiative sought to educate the public on the perils of substance abuse and the critical role of families and communities in prevention and rehabilitation.

The performances underscored the importance of youth as the backbone of society and reinforced the message that



tackling drug abuse requires a collective effort. While the government continues to implement preventive measures, active community participation remains vital in addressing this pressing issue.

The street plays were staged across multiple locations in Budgam, including Badran, Nasrullahpora, Kralpora, and

Badgam town, attracting significant public engagement. The initiative received widespread appreciation, with the local community commending the efforts of District Social Welfare Officer Budgam Ubaid-ul-Khazir "JKAS" Residents expressed optimism about the continuation of such awareness programs in the future.

DC Kulgam reviews functioning of Eklavya Model Residential School Tangmarg

■ **Farooq Rather**

KULGAM, MARCH 01: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Kulgam, Athar Aamir Khan today chaired a meeting of concerned officers to review the functioning of the Eklavya Model Residential School Tangmarg. During the meeting, the Principal of the school informed the chair about the available facilities and additional requirements of the residential school including the hostel facility for students, computer lab and library.

He also informed the chair that presently there are 140 students enrolled in the Residential School and this year there will be addition of more 60 students. The DC also took stock of progress of construction work of teachers quarters, boundary wall besides developing the infrastructure in respect to intake capacity of school.

He further stressed the importance of ensuring that the students



have access to all necessary resources including computer lab, library and laboratory facilities to excel in their academic pursuits, including extra-curricular activities. DC also highlighted the need for regular monitoring of the academic progress of the students and stressed to ensure availability of requisite facilities for the students at the Residential school. The meeting was attended by ADDC, Altaf Ahmad Khan; CPO, Ex., Engineer R&B DH Pora, CEO, Cluster Principal HSS Manzagam, Warden of School and other officers.

AICTE Approved 2 Days Conference Concludes at Aryans on National Science Day

Experts from NITTER, Chandigarh interacted with Aryans Engineering Students

■ **HT News Network**

Srinagar, 1st March A two-day National Conference, jointly organized by the All-India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) and Aryans College of Engineering, Rajpura, Near Chandigarh on "Disaster Management & Resilient Infrastructure" was concluded in Urdu & English Languages under AICTE-VAANI (Vibrant Advocacy For Advancement and Nurturing of Indian Languages) scheme. 12 seminars conducted and concluded on National Science Day which is celebrated on 28th Feb across Nation to mark the discovery of the Raman Effect by Indian physicist Sir C. V. Raman.

Dr JK Saini, Director, Aryans College of



Engineering addressed all on importance of this conference. The 12 session including inauguration & concluding were

addressed by Dr Amit Goyal, National Institute of Technical Teachers Training & Research (NITTTR), Chandigarh; Dr.

Debashish & Dr Hemant, Chitkara University, Chandigarh; Dr Kaushik Bharti & Er Ifra, SVIET, Chandigarh; Er. Rahul, Doaba Group of Colleges, Er Mudasar Ahmad, Aryans College of Engineering, Ms Dhamika Singla, AIMT, Rajpura, Participants from Swami Vivekananda Institute, Quest Group of Colleges, Gulzar Group of Colleges etc. attended this conference.

Sessions focused on various topics including Natural disasters Disaster Management concept, Disaster preparedness, Early Warning, Disaster recovery, Community resilience training, Disaster response, Disaster management cycle, Disaster risk Reduction, A disaster resilient design, Early assessment of disasters,

DC Kathua flags off Biker Rally dedicated to combat Drug Abuse in Border Areas

■ HT News Network

KATHUA, MARCH 1: In a significant initiative to raise awareness about the menace of drug abuse, particularly in border areas, Deputy Commissioner Dr. Rakesh Minhas today flagged off a biker rally from Government Degree College Kathua.

The rally is organized under the banner of 'Nasha Mukht Seemayein', a campaign dedicated to drug-free border regions of Jammu division.

A team of 25 bikers, including 15 female and 10 male riders from the Shakti Udgosh Foundation, will traverse the Kathua-Jammu-Akhnoor-Rajouri-Poonch circuit in next five days. Their mission is to educate people, especially



the youth, about the devastating consequences of drug addiction and inspire them to embrace a healthy, addiction-free lifestyle.

Addressing the bikers, Dr. Rakesh Minhas commended their commitment, particularly the female riders, for taking on this crucial task. He highlighted the growing concern of drug trafficking in border areas and stressed

the importance of collective efforts in shielding the younger generation from falling prey to substance abuse.

"The fight against drug abuse requires unwavering dedication from all sections of society. This rally is a strong message that we are committed to protecting our youth from this menace. Criminal networks have long targeted border

regions, but with awareness and community support, we can put an end to their influence," the DC stated.

He further urged all stakeholders, including local communities, law enforcement agencies, and educational institutions, to actively contribute towards realizing the vision of a Nasha Mukht Bharat (Drug-Free India) as envisioned by the Prime Minister. He also emphasized that such efforts are integral to building a Viksit Bharat, where the youth are empowered and free from the shackles of addiction.

The rally will engage with residents of various border towns, conducting awareness programs, interactive sessions, and motivational campaigns to encourage a drug-free life-

Mission YUVA;Kishtwar admin discusses formation of Small Business Development Units, Business Help Desks

■ HT News Network

KISHTWAR, MARCH 01: A crucial meeting regarding the formation and implementation of Small Business Development Units (SBDUs) and Business Help Desks (BHDs) under Mission YUVA Project was held today here in the VC Room of the DC Office with Deputy Commissioner (DC) Rajesh Kumar Shavan in Chair.

The session commenced with a comprehensive presentation by AD Employment Mamta Sudershan. She elaborated the role, responsibilities, and organizational structure of the SBDUs and BHDs, focusing on their pivotal role in pro-



moting entrepreneurship, financial facilitation, and business development across the district.

The DC emphasized the importance of seamless inter-departmental coordination to ensure the successful establishment and operation of these support units. He highlighted that the collective efforts of all stakeholders are essential for fostering Nano Enterprises and MSMEs, thereby

driving economic growth and employment generation within the region.

The meeting also saw active participation from various stakeholders, each contributing their insights on how to strengthen the local business support ecosystem at the district, sub-division, and tehsil levels. The discussions underscored the need for collaboration in boosting self-employment opportunities

and promoting entrepreneurial initiatives under Mission YUVA.

ADC Kishtwar, Pawan Kotwal, SDM Paddar Amit Kumar all SDMs via virtual mode, AD Employment/ALC Kishtwar Mamta Sudershan, CAO Kishtwar, Amjad Hussain Malik, LDM Kishtwar, and various other senior officials and staff were present on the occasion. The session commenced with a comprehensive presentation by AD Employment Mamta Sudershan. She elaborated the role, responsibilities, and organizational structure of the SBDUs and BHDs, focusing on their pivotal role in promoting entrepreneurship, financial facilitation, and business development.

DC reviews arrangements for Ramadan in Rajouri district

■ HT News Network

RAJOURI, MARCH 01: District Administration Rajouri has established a Control Room to facilitate prompt redressal of public grievances during the holy month of Ramadan. "To facilitate prompt redressal of public grievances, a control room has been set up at District headquarters, where residents can report any issues related to power, water supply, sanitation, or essential commodities during Ramadan" Deputy Commissioner Abhishek Sharma said while chairing a meeting to review the preparations for the holy month of Ramadan here today. The DC issued necessary directions to stakeholder departments to ensure seamless arrangements for the public. The Executive Engineer (Ex En) PDD was instructed to take measures to ensure uninterrupted electricity supply, especially during Sehri, Iftar, and Tarawih prayers, so that people do not face any inconvenience.

Similarly, the Executive Engineer (Ex En) PHE was directed to ensure a smooth and adequate water supply throughout



the district. To maintain hygiene and cleanliness, the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Municipality was tasked with ensuring proper sanitation, particularly in town areas and around religious places.

Furthermore, Additional Deputy Commissioners (ADCs) and Sub-Divisional Magistrates (SDMs) were directed to hold meetings at the sub-divisional level and conduct inspections in their respective jurisdictions to review arrangements and address public concerns, if any.

The Food Safety Department was instructed to conduct market inspections and ensure strict adherence to food safety standards, preventing the sale of adulterated or substandard food items.

Integrated Farming Clusters being developed in 4 Villages of Budhal Block under NRL Mission

DC reviews establishment of support system to facilitate farmers

■ HT News Network

RAJOURI, MARCH 01: Deputy Commissioner Rajouri, Abhishek Sharma, chaired a meeting to review the implementation of the Integrated Farming Cluster under the National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM). The initiative aims to enhance rural livelihoods by promoting sustainable agricultural and allied activities.

During the meeting, the DC emphasized the need for establishing a Livelihood Services Centre (LSC) to facilitate and support farmers with necessary resources, skill training, and market linkages. He also highlighted the importance of identifying potential crops and terrain suitability for better productivity.

As part of the cluster development, four villages of Budhal block—Darsakri, Hubbi, Kewal, and Larkuti—have been selected to implement the program. The DC directed stakeholders to focus on the production of maize, walnuts, Rajma, and sheep wool, considering their high



potential in the region. To streamline the value chain, the DC stressed the need for setting up Rajma packaging units, walnut processing unit, shearing machines, and felt machines to facilitate easy selling, packaging, and branding of locally produced goods. Additionally, he instructed officials to establish a Seed Storage Bank/Germplasm Bank to preserve high-quality seeds for future use. Highlighting the importance of convergence, the DC directed that departments such as Agriculture, Horticulture, Sheep Husbandry, and NRLM work together to maximize the impact of the initiative.

The meeting was attended by Chief Agriculture Officer (CAO), Chief Horticulture Officer (CHO), Chief Animal Husbandry Officer (CAHO), District Sheep Husbandry Officer (DSHO), Senior Scientist, and District Programme Manager NRLM, who shared insights on implementing the project effectively. The meeting was attended by Chief Agriculture Officer (CAO), Chief Horticulture Officer (CHO), Chief Animal Husbandry Officer (CAHO).

2 day programme on “Computer Skill Enhancement Programme” begins at Judicial Academy

■ HT News Network

JAMMU, MARCH 01: Under the patronage of Chief Justice, High Court of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh (Patron-in-Chief, J&K Judicial Academy), Tashi Rabstan, and guidance of Chairperson and members of Governing Committee for J&K Judicial Academy, a two day programme on “Computer Skill enhancement Programme- Level I & II, Cyber laws & Appreciation & Handling of Digital Evidence and e-Courts (ECT_13_2024; ECT_14_2024; & ECT_16_2024)” for Civil Judges of Jammu province commenced today at J&K Judicial Academy, Janipur, Jammu.

On the first day, Justice Atul



Sreedharan, Judge, High Court of J&K and Ladakh, conducted the first technical session. He explained about the cyber threats and digital vulnerabilities becoming more prominent saying that it is essential for the judiciary to adopt secure and efficient technological practices. He discussed that the courts

are soft targets for cyber attacks and must be secured from potential cyber attacks.

Justice Sreedharan also emphasized on various best practices important for securing the court networks and gave demonstrations that not only enhanced the theoretical knowledge but also

provided practical insights into the application of these technological advancements in daily judicial proceedings. The second technical session of the day was conducted by Anoop Sharma, Registrar Computer (IT), High Court of J&K and Ladakh. He elaborated the significant digital initiatives under the e-Courts project, including Case Information System (CIS), National Judicial Data Grid (NJDG), e-Courts Services Portal, Virtual Courts, NSTEP and Digitization of Case Records. The third technical session was jointly conducted by Rajeev Gupta, Senior System Officer and Faheem Manzoor, System Officer, who focused on the JustIS App, Inter-operable.

Nikshay Shivir organized at Health Services Directorate Jammu under 100-day TB Elimination Campaign

■ HT News Network

JAMMU, MARCH 01: As part of the ongoing 100-Day TB Elimination Campaign, the State TB Cell, Directorate of Health Services, Jammu, successfully organized a special Nikshay Shivir aimed at facilitating early detection and treatment of Tuberculosis (TB).

All the officers and officials of DHS actively participated in the camp and underwent X-ray and sputum tests for TB screening.

Director Dr. Rakesh Magotra emphasized that the primary objective of this initiative is to accelerate TB detection, enhance public awareness, and reinforce eradication efforts. "The initiative aligns with the broader goal of eliminating TB

by ensuring timely intervention and improved healthcare accessibility," he added.

The Directorate of Health Services, Jammu has urged the community to actively participate in such programs and contribute towards a healthier and TB-free future.

To maximize outreach, a substantial amount of Information, Education & Communication (IEC) material was displayed and distributed, educating the public on symptoms, prevention, and treatment of TB.

Dy. Director Schemes Dr. Poonam Sethi, Chief Medical Officer Dr. Harbaksh Singh, State TB Officer Dr. Jyoti Jolly and District TB Officer Dr. Anu Saloch were present at the Shivir.

JK Govt tightens noose on illegal mining, initiates stern action to curb the menace Deputy CM warns of severe legal consequences against unauthorized mining

■ HT News Network

JAMMU, MARCH 0: In a decisive move aimed at tackling the menace of illegal mining in the Union Territory, the Jammu and Kashmir government has attached Joint Director, Geology and Mining, Jammu, H L Langeh, with the Administrative Department, ceasing all powers vested in him with immediate effect.

The order, issued by the Mining Department under Government Order No. 13-JK(MNG) of 2025, comes in the wake of directives received from the office of the Deputy Chief Minister, Surinder Choudhary, reinforcing the administration's commitment towards ensuring transparency and accountability in the mining sector.

The government has taken this step in response to rising concerns over unauthorized mining activities that have been causing

severe environmental degradation and revenue loss to the state exchequer. In light of this, the Director of Geology and Mining, J&K, has been directed to submit a comprehensive report addressing complaints related to illegal mining and the issuance of disposal permits, allowing authorities to initiate further scrutiny and take necessary corrective measures. The officials have been instructed to ensure strict compliance with mining regulations to prevent any further unlawful extraction of mineral resources.

Deputy Chief Minister, Surinder Choudhary, while addressing the matter, underscored the government's firm stance against illegal mining, stating that the administration would not tolerate any misconduct or negligence in the execution of duties. He affirmed that illegal mining not only endangers the environment but also deprives the government of rightful revenue, impacting developmental initiatives.



Stressing the need for stringent enforcement mechanisms, the Deputy Chief Minister assured that those found complicit in unauthorized mining activities, irrespective of their position, would face strict legal consequences. He also urged the public to actively participate in reporting any illegal mining

operations, emphasizing that community vigilance plays a crucial role in safeguarding the region's natural resources.

Illegal mining has been a longstanding issue in Jammu and Kashmir, with unregulated extraction causing extensive damage to riverbeds, groundwater levels and local ecosystems. The government has reiterated its commitment to sustainable and legal mining practices, ensuring that all mineral extraction activities are conducted within the ambit of law and environmental norms. Efforts are being intensified to introduce advanced monitoring technologies, including satellite surveillance and digital tracking to curb unlawful mining operations.

The action against the Joint Director of Geology and Mining serves as a strong message that the government will not hesitate to take stringent action against any official found to be negligent or complicit in illegal activities.

The government has urged all stakeholders, including law enforcement agencies, regulatory bodies and local communities to work in unison to eliminate illegal mining. With a clear emphasis on accountability and legal enforcement, this move signals a renewed effort to protect Jammu and Kashmir's natural wealth while fostering responsible economic growth. The citizens are encouraged to report any instances of illegal mining through designated helplines and online grievance portals, reinforcing the administration's objective of public participation in governance and environmental conservation. The action against the Joint Director of Geology and Mining serves as a strong message that the government will not hesitate to take stringent action against any official found to be negligent or complicit in illegal activities.

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Zelensky thanks allies, says Trump relationship can be repaired after White House row

■ HT News Network

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky thanked dozens of allies on social media on Saturday, a day after US President Donald Trump shouted at him in an angry White House meltdown and accused him of not being sufficiently grateful.

Zelensky on X wrote the words "Thank you for your support" in individual replies to around 30 messages of support from European leaders after his heated clash with the new US administration in the White House.

Despite the confrontation, Zelensky earlier thanked Trump, the US Congress and the American people for their support and for his visit.

"Ukraine needs just and lasting peace, and we are working exactly for that," he wrote.

Ukrainian Foreign Minister Andrii Sybiiha also sent multiple thank yous to European counterparts in a social media flurry on Saturday.



Earlier today, Zelensky said his relations with the United States can still be repaired, after Trump accused the Ukrainian leader of refusing to make peace with Russia.

"Of course," Zelensky said when asked in a Fox News interview if the relationship

with Trump could be salvaged.

US-Ukrainian ties are about "more than two presidents", he said, adding that Ukraine badly needs Washington's help in the fight against Russia's far bigger and better-armed military.

"It will be difficult without your support," Zelensky said on Fox — Trump's favorite news channel.

Zelensky's olive branch came hours after the extraordinary Oval Office scene where the years-long US policy of massive support for Ukraine's fight against Russian invasion collapsed in a shouting match.

The row saw European leaders scramble to voice support for Ukraine after Zelensky was made to leave the White House early and without signing a minerals-sharing deal seen as vital to an eventual US-brokered truce.

During the clash, played out in front of US and international media, Trump and Vice President JD Vance shouted at Zelensky, accusing him of not being "thankful" and refusing to accept their proposed truce terms.

"You don't have the cards right now," Trump said. "You're either going to make a deal or we're out, and if we're out, you'll fight it out and I don't think it's going to be pretty."

At least 5 killed, 20 injured in blast at mosque in Pakistan's restive Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

■ HT News Network

PESHAWAR, : A powerful blast killed at least five people and injured 20 others during Friday prayers at Madrassa-e-Haqqania, Akora Khattak, in Nowshera district of the restive Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, police said.

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Secretary Shahab Ali Shah confirmed the death of caretaker of the madrassa and Chief of Jamiat Ulema Islam (Sami Group) Hamidul Haq Haqqani in the blast.

IGP Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Zulfiqar Hameed said the blast is suspected to be a suicide bombing and Hamidul Haq appeared to be the target. "We had provided six security guards to Hamidul Haq," he said.

DPO Nowshera district Abdur Rasheed said the blast occurred during 'Jumma' prayer.

Rescue teams rushed to the site and evacuated the bodies and injured to the hospital. An emergency was declared in both Nowshera and Peshawar hospitals.

A doctor in Qazi Hussain Medical Complex said at least 20 injured and five bodies were brought to the hospital.

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur and Governor Faisal Karim Kundi have condemned the suicide blast.

JUIF leaders have appealed for blood donation for the injured. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur and Governor Faisal Karim Kundi have condemned the suicide blast.

Kurdish militants declare ceasefire in 40-year insurgency in Turkiye

■ HT News Network

ISTANBUL, Mar 1: Kurdish militants who have waged a 40-year insurgency in Turkiye declared a ceasefire on Saturday in what could mark a significant boost to President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's government, two days after their imprisoned leader called for the group to disarm.

The announcement by the Kurdistan Workers Party, or PKK, comes against the backdrop of fundamental changes in the region, including the reconfiguration of power in neighbouring Syria after the toppling of President Bashar Assad, the weakening of the Hezbollah militant movement in Lebanon and the Israel-Hamas war in Gaza.



The PKK declaration was published by the Firat News Agency, a media outlet close to the group, on Saturday. It referred to the insurgents' leader, Abdullah Ocalan, who has been imprisoned by Turkiye since 1999.

"We declare a ceasefire effective today to pave the way for the implementation of Leader Apo's Call for Peace and Democratic Society. None of our forces will take armed action unless

attacked," it said, referring to Ocalan by his nickname.

On Thursday, a delegation of Kurdish politicians announced Ocalan's call for the PKK to lay down its arms and disband after visiting him on his island prison earlier in the day.

The conflict between Turkiye and the PKK has led to tens of thousands of deaths since it began in 1984. The ceasefire is the first sign of a breakthrough since peace talks between

the PKK and Ankara broke down in the summer of 2015.

In its statement, the PKK's executive committee said Ocalan's call indicated that a "new historical process has begun in Kurdistan and the Middle East". Kurdistan refers to the parts of Turkiye, Iraq, Syria and Iran inhabited by Kurds.

While stating that it would "comply with and implement the requirements of the call from our own side", the PKK emphasized that "democratic politics and legal grounds must also be suitable for success".

Ocalan's call came as the main pro-Kurdish political party in Turkiye has faced pressure, with several of its mayors being removed from office in recent months and replaced by government appointees.

Bangladeshi students who toppled Hasina regime form political party

■ HT News Network

DHAKA, : The students' group that led the protests against Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina launched itself as a political party on Friday, declaring there will be no room now for pro-India and pro-Pakistan politics in the country.

The Anti-Discrimination Student Movement or Students against Discrimination (SAD) turned into 'Jatiya Nagorik Party' or National Citizen Party (NCP) at a rally at Manik Mia Avenue in central Dhaka near Parliament with one of the key leaders of the July-August uprising, Nahid Islam, 26, as its convenor. The student leaders also issued a declaration that outlined "a transformative political and economic roadmap for Bangladesh" at the inaugural event, which was attended by representatives of some political parties and envoys of the Vatican and Pakistan. The student movement led a mass protest leading to the ouster of Hasina's over 15 years of rule on August 5 last year. Three days later, Muhammad Yunus assumed charge as the Chief Adviser of the Interim government. The NCP's inaugural rally began with a recitation from the Quran, the Bhagwad Gita, the Bible and the Tripitaka, followed by the national anthem.

A minute of silence was also observed in memory of those killed during the July uprising.

"There will be no room for pro-Indian and pro-Pakistani politics in Bangladesh. We will build the state keeping Bangladesh, the interest of the people of Bangladesh ahead," said NCP's convenor Nahid Islam, who resigned as the Information adviser from Yunus' advisory council earlier this week.

"We want to talk about the future," he said. "We want to move beyond the past and discuss



the possibilities of Bangladesh." The Anti-Discrimination Student Movement or Students against Discrimination (SAD) turned into 'Jatiya Nagorik Party' or National Citizen Party (NCP) at a rally at Manik Mia Avenue in central Dhaka near Parliament with one of the key leaders of the July-August uprising, Nahid Islam, 26, as its convenor.

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Lebanon's new PM calls for 'full Israeli withdrawal' while visiting border areas

■ HT News Network

AITAROUN (LEBANON), :

Lebanon's new prime minister, Nawaf Salam, used a tour on Friday of areas near the border with Israel that suffered wide destruction during the 14-month Israel-Hezbollah war to call for an Israeli withdrawal and promised residents of border villages a safe return to their homes and reconstruction. Salam's visit came two days after his government won a vote of confidence in parliament, where members of Hezbollah's bloc voted in favour of the new administration's policy statement, although it said that only the national army has the right to defend the country in case of war. The statement was a blow to the militant group that has kept its weapons over the past decades saying it is necessary to defend Lebanon against Israel.

"This is the first real working day of the government. We salute the army and its martyrs," Salam said in the southern port city of Tyre while meeting residents of the border village of Dheira. "We promise you a safe return to your homes as soon as possible."

The government is committed to the reconstruction of destroyed homes, which "is not a promise but a personal commitment by myself and the Government," Salam added.

Israel withdrew its troops from much of the border area earlier this month, but left five outlooking posts inside Lebanon, in what Lebanese officials called a violation of the US-brokered ceasefire that came into effect on November 27, ending the war. "This is the first real working day of the government. We salute the army and its martyrs," Salam said in the southern port city of Tyre while meeting residents of the border village of Dheira. "We promise you a safe return to your homes as soon as possible."

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Trump says Zelenskyy should stop saying negative things about Putin

■ HT News Network

WASHINGTON, Mar 1: US President Donald Trump said on Friday that Volodymyr Zelenskyy should stop saying all negative things about Russian leader Vladimir Putin.

When asked what Zelenskyy needs to do to restart talks following a failed meeting in the Oval office earlier in the day, Trump said "He's got to say, I want to make peace."

"He doesn't have to stand there and say 'Putin this, Putin that,' all negative things," Trump told reporters before leaving for Florida.

Trump reiterated that Zelenskyy does not have the cards to keep fighting. (UNI)

Rishi Sunak, wife Akshata Murty plan new math charity for children

■ HT News Network

LONDON, Mar 1: Former British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak and his wife Akshata Murty on Saturday revealed plans to set up a new charity focussed on improving the mathematics and numeracy skills among children and young people in England.

The Richmond Project, named after the North Yorkshire home and constituency Sunak continues to represent as a backbench Conservative Party member of Parliament for Richmond and Northallerton, will be launched later this year as a registered charity.

It marks the first major joint project by the couple, both 44, since Sunak left 10 Downing Street last year and will be aimed at helping schoolchildren build confidence in tackling numbers.

"Later this year, Akshata and I will launch The Richmond Project – a new charity focused on improving numeracy," Sunak announced on social media.

"Confidence with numbers transforms lives. It unlocks opportunity, fuels social mobility, and helps people thrive. But right now, too many struggle. More to come soon," he said.

Akshata Murty took to her Instagram to note that the charity signifies their shared passion around the power of education.

"Maths anxiety is real, but opportunity starts with confidence! Later this year, we're launching The Richmond Project, a new charity focused on helping more people build confidence with numbers – because we believe numeracy unlocks opportunity," she said.

"Right now, half of the working-age adults in the UK have low numeracy skills. That impacts everything like getting a job, managing household bills, even navigating daily life. Both of us have seen firsthand the power of education to change lives. Now, we want to help more young people and adults build the confidence with numbers, ensuring a happier life."

The daughter of Infosys co-founder Narayana Murthy said it was "early days" for the project but asked her followers to "watch this space" for more details.

Boats collide on river in southern China, killing at least 11 people

■ HT News Network

BEIJING, Mar 1: A small ferry was hit by an oil spill cleaning vessel on a river in southern China, state media said, killing 11 people while five more are missing.

Nineteen people fell overboard during the crash on the Yuanshui River in Hunan province on Tuesday morning, and three were rescued the same day, according to the country's official news agency Xinhua.

The accident happened at a point where the river is more than 60 metres (200 feet) deep, on average, and 500 metres (1,600 feet) wide.

Rescue teams salvaged the ferry on Friday night, according to Xinhua, and are continuing the search.

One person who was rescued escaped the ferry by breaking a window with his foot, a relative told The Paper, a Shanghai-based newspaper.

The relative also said the ferry is the main way for people to come and go from their village.

A video obtained by The Paper showed the much larger oil spill cleaning vessel hitting the ferry from behind in calm water.

China News Agency said on Wednesday the three people on the larger boat, none of whom injured, were placed under investigation by police after their boat reached shore safely.

There was no immediate word on how the accident happened, and phone calls to the local government went unanswered on a Saturday morning. (AP)



**5 members of family died killed in roof collapse in Punjab****AGENCIES**

TARN TARAN, MAR 1 (UND)

Five members of a family died after the roof of a house collapsed in Pandori Gola village of Tarn Taran district on Saturday morning. The deceased include a husband-wife and their three children. According to the information received, the victims were sleeping at the time of the accident.

The deceased have been identified as Gurvinder Singh, Amarjit Kaur, Eku and Gurlal Singh. On receiving information about the incident, police reached the spot. Police have sent the bodies to the hospital for post-mortem and are investigating the incident.

Withdrawal of Rs 2000 currency notes at 98.18 pc: RBI**AGENCIES**

NEW DELHI/MUMBAI, MAR 1 (UND)

The Government has received 98.18 percent of Rs 2000 currency notes at the close of business on February 28, 2025, the RBI said on Saturday while adding that the banknotes continue to be legal tender.

The total value of Rs 2000 banknotes in circulation, which was Rs 3.56 lakh crore at the close of business on May 19, 2023, when the withdrawal of Rs 2000 banknotes was announced, has declined to Rs 6,471 crore at the close of business on February 28, 2025.

Thus, 98.18 per cent of the Rs 2000 banknotes in circulation as on May 19, 2023, has since been returned, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) said in a statement.

The facility for deposit and / or exchange of the Rs 2000 banknotes was available at all bank branches in the country up to October 07, 2023. The facility for exchange of the Rs 2000 banknotes is available at the 19 Issue Offices of the Reserve Bank (RBI Issue Offices) since May 19, 2023. From October 09, 2023, RBI Issue Offices are also accepting Rs 2000 banknotes from individuals / entities for deposit into their bank accounts. Further, members of the public are sending Rs 2000 banknotes through India Post from any post office within the country, to any of the RBI Issue Offices for credit to their bank accounts.

AGTF arrests gangster after exchange of fire, .32 caliber pistol recovered**AGENCIES**

CHANDIGARH, MAR 1 (UND)

In a major breakthrough, SAS Nagar police in a joint operation with Anti Gangster Task Force (AGTF) arrested Gangster Malkiat alias Maxi, an operative of foreign-based terrorist Goldy Brar and Gangster Goldy Dhillon, after a brief exchange of fire, near Ghagar bridge on Zirakpur-Ambala Highway in SAS Nagar and recovered one .32 calibre pistol from him, Punjab DGP Gaurav Yadav said on Saturday. He said that in an attempt to flee from the custody, the gangster opened fire on the police team, in self-defence and retaliatory fire by the police team, Maxi sustained a bullet injury in his left leg fire and has been shifted to Civil Hospital, Mohali for medical treatment.

Yadav said that Maxi, a resident of Rodala village in Rajasansi, Amritsar, is involved in an extortion racket led by Goldy Brar and Goldy Dhillon.

Recently, they targeted a Mohali based property dealer and demanded Rs 50 Lakh as extortion money in January 2025.

Maxi has a criminal history with cases pertaining to extortion and arms act registered against him.

4 killed, 18 injured as bus rams into truck in Agra**AGENCIES**

AGRA (UP), MAR 1 (UND)

Four persons were killed and about 18 people were injured when a double-decker bus rammed into a stationary truck in Fatehabad area of Agra district here in Uttar Pradesh on Saturday, police sources said.

Police sources said that the incident took place on the Agra-Lucknow Expressway when the bus of devotees was returning to Jaipur after visiting Kashi via Ayodhya after the Maha Kumbh in Prayagraj. "Near Lohia Ujhawali cut, the bus rammed into the truck parked on the side of the expressway from behind," they said.

Police sources said that the devotees trapped inside the bus were taken out by the local residents by breaking the glass of the windows. "The police and UPIDA team also reached the spot. The injured were taken to the Community Health Centre, but due to the unavailability of doctors there, they had to be taken to nearby private hospitals," they said.

Budget 2025-26 focuses on strengthening the agriculture sector: PM**AGENCIES**

NEW DELHI, MAR 1 (UND)

Prime Minister Narendra Modi hailed the Union Budget 2025-26, saying it focuses on strengthening the agriculture sector and boosting the rural economy.

Addressing the post-budget webinar on agriculture and rural prosperity, Modi said, "We consider agriculture as the primary engine of development and our aim is to ensure that no farmer is left behind"

"We are working towards two major goals, first, the development of the agricultural sector and second is the prosperity of villages".

Sharing some data on the Agriculture sector, he said, PM-Kisan Samman Nidhi was launched 6 years ago, and approximately Rs 3.75 lakh crore has been directly transferred to the bank accounts of 11 crore farmers.



"We have created a farmer-centric digital infrastructure so that the benefits of this scheme can reach farmers across the country" the PM added.

Modi said today, India's agricultural production is at a record level.

"Agricultural production which was around 265 million tonnes 10-11 years ago, has now increased to more than 330 million tonnes" he said.

The Prime Minister informed that Horticulture production has exceeded 350 million tonnes and this achievement is a result of our Government's efforts through initiatives like the 'Beej Se Bazar Tak' program.

He said, we have announced 'PM Dhan Dhanya Krishi Yojana' in the budget.

"Under this, focus will be laid on the development of the 100 districts with the lowest agricultural productivity in the country," Modi said.

The PM noted that the government has launched the PM Matsya Sampada Yojana in 2019, which has significantly improved production, productivity, and post-harvest management. Investment in this sector has increased, and today, fish production and exports have doubled, he added.

Bihar CM distributes appointment letters to 59k 28 special teachers**AGENCIES**

PATNA, MAR 1 (UND)

Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar distributed appointment letters to 59 thousand 28 special teachers including 55 thousand 845 primary teachers, 2532 secondary teachers and 651 higher secondary teachers.

While distributing the appointment letters as a token to some of the newly appointed teachers here on Saturday, Kumar said that his government took several steps for improving the educational scenario after coming to power in the state.

He said that 3 lakh 68 thousand contractual teachers have been appointed through Panchayat and Civic bodies since 2006-07.

However after 2023 the appointment of teachers was being made through Bihar Public Service Commission and 28000 con-



tractual teachers too have become government teachers after qualifying the examination.

In the second phase of the state eligibility test 2 lakh 53 thousand and 961 contractual teachers qualified and now only 86000 were left who would also qualify the examination.

The Chief Minister said that a total number of 4 lakh 71 thousand and 233 aspirants qualified as government teachers.

Reiterating his commitments for overall development of every section of the society including women, Kumar asked the newly appointed teachers to contribute in the educational and personality development of the students. The Chief Minister also asked the education minister to regularly monitor the teaching activities and ensure to solve the issues obstructing the teaching within the state.

Telangana: SLBC Tunnel rescue operation in final stage**AGENCIES**

HYDERABAD, MAR 1 (UND)

The rescue operation to trace the eight trapped persons, about 14 km inside the Srisailem Left Bank Canal (SLBC) tunnel at Domalpenta in Nagarkurnool district, entered the final stage on Saturday.

The trapped persons could be found mostly today, as the National Geophysical Research Institute (NGRI) team which scanned different locations in the tunnel using the Ground Penetrating Radar (GPR) System, traced some soft material under the debris at five locations, according to reliable sources here.

Accordingly the rescue teams headed towards the identified locations to clear the debris and silt and eventually to pull out the workers, the sources said.



A few ambulances were kept ready near the mishap site and the officials from different departments, especially Police and Health, have also been alerted but officials are tight-lipped over the latest development.

They are likely to make a formal announcement this evening over the rescue operation.

A portion of the SLBC tunnel had collapsed on February 22 and eight

workers were trapped inside the tunnel.

Nearly 600 personnel from 12 different departments have taken up the rescue operation.

Rescue teams from NDRF, SDRF, Singareni Collieries Company Limited (SCCL), HYDRA, Defence, Navy, South Central Railway (SCR) and Rat Miners were focusing on five locations identified by NGRI to locate the workers.

Shah instructs authorities to ensure free movement of people in Manipur from Mar 8**AGENCIES**

NEW DELHI, MAR 1 (UND)

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Saturday chaired a high-level review meeting on the security situation in Manipur here and instructed the authorities to ensure the free movement of people on all the roads in the state from March 8.

During the meeting, he directed that strict action should be taken against anyone attempting to create obstructions.

Shah also directed that the fencing work on both sides of the designated entry points along Manipur's international border should be completed at the earliest.

He said that to make Manipur drug-free, the



entire network involved in the drug trade should be dismantled.

The Home Minister said that the Union Government, under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi remains fully committed to restore peace in Manipur and is providing all necessary assistance in this regard.

The meeting was attended by Manipur Governor

Ajay Kumar Bhalla, Union Home Secretary, Director, Intelligence Bureau, Deputy Chief of Army Staff, Army Commander of the Eastern Command, Directors General of Border Security Force (BSF), Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) and Assam Rifles, Security Advisor, Manipur and senior officers of MHA, Army and Manipur administration.

No fuel for vehicles older than 15 years in Delhi after Mar 31: Minister**AGENCIES**

NEW DELHI, MAR 1 (UND)

To control pollution in the National Capital, the Delhi government took a big decision on Saturday that vehicles older than 15 years will not get fuel.

The announcement was made by Delhi Environment Minister Manjinder Singh Sirsa, after a meeting with senior officials of the the government.

He said the government's initial focus will be on heavy vehicles entering Delhi and teams will check whether the laid-down rules are being followed.

Announcing several other anti-pollution measures, Sirsa said that the newly formed BJP government is taking stringent steps to curb vehicular emissions and pollution.

Restrictions on older vehicles, mandatory anti-smog measures, and the transi-



tion to electric public transport were among the issues discussed.

The Minister said, "We don't have information about vehicles coming from outside but we have decided to stop giving fuel to vehicles older than 15 years after March 31, 2025. A team will be set up to identify such vehicles".

"We are going to make it mandatory for all big hotels, office complexes, airports, commercial complexes and construction sites in Delhi

to immediately install anti-smog guns to control pollution" he told reporters.

Sirsa also announced that nearly 90 per cent of the public CNG buses in Delhi will be phased out and replaced by electric buses by December 2025.

He said that the BJP government will get permission from the Centre to implement cloud seeding and induce artificial rain whenever air pollution levels spike in the National Capital.

Complete land acquisition for ongoing development projects by Mar 15: UP CM**AGENCIES**

LUCKNOW, MAR 1 (UND)

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Saturday directed the officials that the process of land acquisition and distribution of compensation for the ongoing development projects of central and state governments in various districts be completed by March 15.

During a review meeting to assess development projects under the central and state governments, the CM emphasised that adherence to timelines is crucial for development projects of public importance, as they not only enhance the lives of common citizens but also contribute to employment generation.

He said that project delays often necessitate cost revisions, which adversely impact revenue. He directed the district administration to conduct regular reviews of land acquisition and compensation distribution for development projects, ensuring consistent communication with affected farmers and



families.

Yogi directed the District Magistrates to conduct a weekly review, while the Commissioner should review progress every 15 days and submit a report to senior officials in the CM's Office, Chief Secretary's Office and the relevant departments.

The Chief Minister said that common citizens aspire for development and should be made aware of its positive outcomes. "They should also be informed in advance about the circle rate for compensation," he said.

He emphasised that nodal officers must be deployed for all initiated

projects, ensuring strict adherence to quality standards and timely execution. Yogi directed that the construction of a 350-bed hospital by ESIC in Greater Noida and a 100-bed hospital in Gorakhpur should progress within a set time frame.

The CM said, "Any arising challenges should be promptly resolved. The Greater Noida hospital is expected to generate around 1,000 direct and 2,000 to 3,000 indirect jobs."

Yogi directed the officials to identify those obstructing development projects and take strict action against them. He reviewed various development projects in Varanasi and directed their timely completion.

The Chief Minister reiterated that development and employment generation remain top priorities, urging officials to work with a zero pendency approach.

UN report says Lebanese children struggle with hunger, trauma, lost of education

AGENCIES
BEIRUT

The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) released a report on Friday on the lasting negative impact on Lebanese children from the Israel-Lebanon conflict even after the ceasefire, calling for urgent support to help them rebuild their lives.

In a survey conducted by UNICEF last month, 72 per cent of caregivers said their children were anxious or nervous during the war, and 62 per cent said they were depressed or sad, which "represents a surge from pre-war data collected in 2023"

According to the report, in the densely populated areas of Baalbek-Hermel and Bekaa governorates, repeated airstrikes took a toll on children's nutrition and health.

In Baalbek-Hermel, 51 per cent of children under two are experienc-



ing severe food poverty. In Bekaa, the rate was 45 per cent, a dramatic increase from 28 per cent in 2023, the report said.

The report also pointed out the challenging education situation in Lebanon.

Despite the ceasefire, school attendance remains low. Over 25 per cent of children were still not attending school as of last month's survey, compared to 65 per cent during the conflict.

Meanwhile, financial barriers prevent many children from attending school. Two-thirds of families with children out of school report that the high costs of school fees, transportation, and materials are the main reasons, a number that has doubled since 2023.

The report added that schools were destroyed or heavily damaged in the war, and hundreds more were used as shelters for

some of the 1.3 million people who were internally displaced due to the conflict.

UNICEF urged the global community to aid Lebanon's children by contributing to their 2025 appeal for \$658.2 million, which aims to provide lifesaving assistance to 2.4 million people in the country, Xinhua news agency reported.

"Lebanon must receive the help it requires to restore vital infrastructure and services, ensuring that children have a future to look forward to," said Akhil Iyer, UNICEF representative in Lebanon.

"We call on all parties to abide by the terms of the ceasefire and to work with the international community to sustain peace and ensure a brighter future for children. We call on the country's new government to put children's rights and needs on top of the reform and recovery agenda," he added.

HT-HEALTH

Need regulation, awareness on junk food to fight obesity in India: Luke Coutinho

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI

India needs regulation and awareness on junk food to fight obesity in India, said Luke Coutinho, holistic health coach, while praising Prime Minister Narendra Modi's initiative to fight the condition in the country.

"Prime Minister Narendra Modi is absolutely right in his vision of combating this problem of obesity," said Coutinho, during his visit to an Anganwadi Centre in New Delhi.

"We need to have regulation and awareness about junk food for children and adults, which is contributing towards the obesity epidemic," Coutinho said. He added that nutrition must begin right from an early age and education about nutrition must be imparted in languages across the country.

He also emphasised



the need to boost access to local superfoods like millet. "Modi has encouraged us to use local superfoods. We can maintain a natural balanced diet with these foods and support the macros of proteins, carbohydrates and fat," said Coutinho, co-founder of Luke Coutinho Holistic Healing Systems.

During an address in the 119th Episode of 'Mann Ki Baat', PM Modi discussed rising cases of obesity and the need to prevent it as it can lead to several diseases like hypertension, diabetes and cancer. According to a recent study, one in every eight people today is troubled by the prob-

lem of obesity.

"Cases of obesity have doubled in the past years, but, what is even more worrying is that the problem of obesity has increased fourfold even among children. WHO data shows that in 2022, about 250 crore people around the world were overweight; that is, they had more weight than required," the PM said.

He suggested "reducing the consumption of edible oil by 10 per cent."

While expressing support for the mission against obesity, he said: "Everyone should take personal responsibility as an Indian citizen to do our part and choose the right food, exercise every day and focus on our mental and emotional health".

The expert added that "we need awareness and mindfulness and Ghar-ka-khana (home cooked food) has to be promoted... to make India healthy.

Global research on giloy surges over 375 pc in last 10 years: Ayush Ministry

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI

Global research revealing promising role of giloy in boosting immunity has soared 376.5 per cent in the last decade, said the Ministry of Ayush on Friday.

The increase in the number of research publications around Giloy (Tinospora cordifolia), as per data from PubMed, a globally recognised database for biomedical and life sciences research, highlights a growing global interest in the plant's therapeutic potential.

From 243 studies published in 2014, the number of research on 'guduchi or tinospora cordifolia or amrita' rose to 913 in 2024, the Ministry said.

Tinospora cordifolia, commonly known as Guduchi or Giloy, familiar as Amrita in Sanskrit, which translates to the 'herb of immortality', because of its abundant



beneficial properties.

It has been used in therapeutics for a long time in Ayush systems.

While scientists have long been intrigued by Giloy's medicinal properties, the years following the Covid-19 pandemic saw a major spike in research as experts explored natural immunity boosters and holistic healthcare solutions.

Emerging studies reinforce its immune-modulatory, antiviral, and adaptogenic properties, making it a subject of keen interest

among global researchers and healthcare practitioners.

"Scientific validation of Ayush formulations, herbs, etc., including medicinal plants like Giloy, is a top priority for the Ministry. We are committed to strengthening research collaborations, funding scientific studies, and promoting evidence-based integration of Ayurveda with mainstream healthcare to benefit global health," said Vaidya Rajesh Kotecha, Secretary, Ministry

of Ayush.

"The increasing number of clinical studies and laboratory research suggests that Giloy may have a significant role in cancer therapy, autoimmune disease management, and even inflammatory disorders," added Professor Rabinarayan Acharya, Director General, CCRAS.

Dr Galib, Associate Professor at the All-India Institute of Ayurveda, New Delhi, said: "scientific exploration of Giloy is gaining momentum, with increasing studies showcasing its medicinal potential".

Recent research also highlights its bioactive compounds and therapeutic benefits, including immune-boosting and anti-inflammatory properties.

"This growing interest positions Giloy as a promising candidate for future clinical applications in various medical fields," said the expert.

Study explores how air pollution leads to memory loss in Alzheimer's

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI

Toxins found in air pollution, and wildfire smoke may trigger a chemical change in the brain that can lead to memory loss as seen in Alzheimer's disease, according to a study.

Scientists at Scripps Research, US, discovered a chemical change -- known as S-nitrosylation -- that prevents brain cells from making new connections and ultimately results in cellular death.

Blocking S-nitrosylation partially reversed signs of memory loss in Alzheimer's mouse models and nerve cells produced from human stem cells.

"We've revealed the molecular details of how pollutants can contribute to memory loss and neurodegenerative disease," said Stuart Lipton, Professor at Scripps Research.

"This could ultimately lead to new drugs that



block these effects to better treat Alzheimer's disease," Lipton added.

The findings are published in the journal Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences. Lipton's research group and colleagues have previously demonstrated that aberrant S-nitrosylation reactions contribute to some forms of cancer, autism,

Alzheimer's disease, Parkinson's disease, and other conditions.

In the new study, Lipton and team investigated the effect of S-nitrosylation on the protein CRTCI, which helps regulate genes that are critical for forming and maintaining connections between brain cells.

Using cultured brain cells from mice and

humans, the researchers first confirmed that excess nitric oxide (NO) leads to S-nitrosylation of CRTCI. They then discovered that this chemical modification prevented CRTCI from binding to another critical brain regulatory protein, CREB.

As a result, other genes necessary for forming connections between neurons failed to be stimulated.

"This is a pathway that affects your memory and is directly implicated in human Alzheimer's disease," said Lipton.

In both the Alzheimer's mouse model and in human neurons derived from stem cells of patients with the neurodegenerative condition, the team observed high levels of S-nitrosylated CRTCI at an early stage of the disease.

The findings further support the idea that chemical change plays a key role in the development of disease symptoms.

Birth defects kill about 300 children under 5 daily in South-East Asia: WHO

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI

Birth defects claim the lives of about 300 children under five years of age, every day in the South-East Asia region, said the World Health Organization (WHO) on Saturday, ahead of World Birth Defects Day.

World Birth Defects Day is marked every year on March 3. It aims to raise awareness about prevention programmes and improve the quality of services and care received by people with congenital anomalies, disorders, or conditions.

"During the past two decades, the contribution of birth defects to the cause of death among under-5 children has increased from 3.9 per cent to 11.5 per cent in our region," said Saima Wazed, Regional Director for WHO South-East Asia, in a statement.

"Birth defects are now the third most common cause of death (11 per cent)



among under-5 children in our region -- approximately 300 every day. Additionally, they cause severe morbidity which usually is ignored or not highlighted," she added.

The global health body called on countries to raise awareness about birth defects and strengthen health systems response to the specific health, development, and psychosocial needs of this population. This must be coupled with the need for actions to prevent, detect, and manage these congenital anomalies,

Wazed noted.

Birth defects have a significant impact on the quality of life of an individual, and place a considerable burden on the families, community, society, and the healthcare systems.

Wazed said that although genetics plays a major role, many birth defects are preventable through health system interventions.

"Rubella vaccination, identification and management of sexually transmitted infections in preg-

nancy, etc., and addressing environmental factors such as exposure to pollutants, lifestyle choices and socioeconomic conditions that affect pregnant women and fetuses," are some measures to prevent birth defects.

Further, Wazed urged the countries to "reaffirm investment in women, girls, adolescents, and vulnerable populations."

Besides prioritising birth defects, she stressed the need to enhance the health system's capacity for early detection and management, by introducing and scaling-up tests for newborn screening of birth defects and other conditions.

"Countries need to invest in establishing or strengthening their birth defect surveillance systems - with a particular focus on improving the availability, analysis, and utilization of relevant data for programmatic decision-making," the Regional Director said.

Genetic, lifestyle factors may explain why Down syndrome leads to dementia: Study

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI

A team of US researchers has decoded that genetic and lifestyle factors may determine why some people with Down syndrome suffer dementia.

Studies reveal that people with Down syndrome have over a 90 per cent lifetime risk of developing dementia caused by Alzheimer's disease as they age. However, the link behind the conditions was not known yet. Alzheimer's is the most common cause of dementia.

People with Down syndrome are born with an extra copy of chromosome 21, which affect how their brain and body develop. Alzheimer's is a progressive brain disorder that slowly destroys memory and thinking skills

Research from the universities of Pittsburgh and California found an unexpected Alzheimer's disease progression in a woman with Down syn-



drome.

The Down syndrome patient participated in the study for 10 long years, and donated her brain for research after her death.

"We are interested in trying to link neuroimaging with neuropathology, because we want to use information from neuropathology datasets to inform diagnostic and therapeutic criteria for

individuals with Down syndrome before they pass away," said Jr-Jiun Liou, a postdoctoral scholar in the department of bioengineering, University of Pittsburgh, who imaged her brain using a high-resolution MRI scanner.

Although the woman was cognitively stable at the time of death, MRI imaging revealed the presence of neuropathology

indicative of Alzheimer's disease in her brain.

"Before she passed away, all the clinical assessments in our years of studying her indicated that she was cognitively stable, which is why this case is so fascinating," Liou said.

"Despite her brain's pathology indicating Alzheimer's, we think that her cognitive stability could have been attributed to her high education level or underlying genetic factors."

The data from the case study, published in the journal Alzheimer's & Dementia, also presents a rare opportunity to uncover genetic or lifestyle factors that may contribute to cognitive preservation.

"If we can identify the genetic underpinnings or lifestyle factors that allowed her brain to function well despite the pathology, we may uncover strategies that could benefit others," the team said.



Neymar named in preliminary Brazil squad for World Cup qualifiers

AGENCIES

RIO DE JANEIRO, MAR 1 (UNI)

Neymar has been included in Brazil's preliminary squad for World Cup qualifiers against Colombia and Argentina, the Brazilian Football Confederation (CBF) said on Friday.

The 33-year-old has not represented his country since suffering a ruptured anterior cruciate ligament in his left knee during a World Cup qualifier against Uruguay in Montevideo in October 2023.

After a long recovery process, the 33-year-old has shown glimpses of his best form since joining boyhood club Santos from Al-Hilal in January.

Bengaluru Open: Budding stars train with professionals at tennis clinic

AGENCIES

BENGALURU, MAR 1 (UNI)

More than 60 budding tennis players in Bengaluru had the unique opportunity to learn from professionals at a Tennis Clinic held at the KSLTA Tennis Stadium on the sidelines of the 2025 DafaNews Bengaluru Open on Saturday. Interacting with 38th National Games gold medallists Niki Kaliyanda Poonacha and SD Prajwal Dev, along with the current edition's doubles finalists Blake Bayldon and Matthew Christopher Romios, and USA's Brandon Holt's coach, Bo Trays, the young players gained valuable insights into the sport. The clinic featured a Q&A session, live drills, and hands-on coaching, allowing the young athletes to engage with experienced professionals. Participants received guidance on fitness, nutrition, training routines, and match preparation while also demonstrating their skills in volleys and baseline shots.

India, New Zealand clash for top spot in Group A

AGENCIES

DUBAI, MAR 1 (UNI)

The Champions Trophy is reaching its decisive phase, with the group stage nearing its conclusion and teams battling for supremacy. India has already sealed a semifinal berth, while New Zealand has also progressed, setting the stage for a highly anticipated Group A clash between the two sides here on Sunday.

New Zealand has consistently proven to be a formidable force in ICC tournaments, and their performances in this edition have been no exception. The Kiwis opened their campaign with a commanding victory over the hosts and followed it up with a convincing win against Bangladesh. India, on the other hand, showcased their dominance with a comprehensive win over Bangladesh before Virat Kohli's masterclass against Pakistan ensured the arch-rival's early exit.

Both teams have executed their game plans effectively, with key players stepping up at crucial moments. Michael Bracewell played a stellar role in New Zealand's win over Bangladesh, receiving ample support from



the bowling attack. India's spinners played a decisive role in dismantling Pakistan, while Kohli's magnificent century highlighted his return to form. Additionally, Rachin Ravindra made a significant impact, etching his name in the record books with a stunning hundred.

With a semifinal spot confirmed, India may opt to rest captain Rohit Sharma and pace spearhead Mohammed Shami for the upcoming encounter. However, the presence of an in-form Kohli will

pose a major challenge for New Zealand's bowling unit, led by Mitchell Santner. The former India captain's stellar knock against Pakistan reaffirmed his ability to deliver on the big stage.

Ravindra, meanwhile, has been a standout performer for New Zealand. The 25-year-old's match-winning 112 against Bangladesh underlined his ability to thrive in ICC tournaments, marking his fourth century in such events. His form will be

crucial for the Kiwis as

they look to challenge the Indian attack.

Both teams possess formidable bowling arsenals. While Bracewell and William O'Rourke have led New Zealand's charge, India has relied on the pace duo of Shami and Harshit Rana. The upcoming encounter will serve as a key test for both sides.

India's vice-captain Shubman Gill has been one of the tournament's standout batsmen. The 25-year-old began his campaign with a century against Bangladesh and followed it up with a crucial 46 against Pakistan. Having delivered notable performances against New Zealand in the past, including an unbeaten 80 in the 2023 World Cup semifinal, Gill remains a key player for India.

New Zealand has historically troubled India in ICC events, but the Men in Blue ended that streak with their semifinal triumph in 2023. With both teams through to the semifinals, the upcoming contest will determine the group leader. India, with its current form, holds the advantage and will aim to maintain an unbeaten run.

The match is scheduled for 2:30 pm IST on Sunday.

Karun Nair century puts Vidarbha on brink of Ranji Trophy glory

AGENCIES

NAGPUR, MAR 1 (UNI)



Karun Nair's stellar century put Vidarbha in a commanding position on the fourth day of the Ranji Trophy final against Kerala at the Vidarbha Cricket Association Stadium here on Saturday.

At stumps, Vidarbha stood at 249/4 in 90 overs in their second innings, holding a formidable lead of 286 runs. Nair remained unbeaten on 132 off 280 deliveries, laced with 10 boundaries and two sixes, guiding his team towards a dominant position.

Earlier, Kerala was bowled out for 342 in first innings after Vidarbha made 379 in its first innings.

Vidarbha weathered an early setback but soon found stability through the resolute partnership between Nair and Danish Malewar. The duo stitched a vital 182-run stand for the third wicket, frustrating Kerala's bowlers on a pitch that remained favourable for batting.

Earlier in the day, Kerala had sniffed an opportunity after dismissing both openers - Parth Rekha (1) and Dhruv Shorey (5) - cheaply with just 7 runs on the board. However, a crucial lapse in the field

saw Akshay Chandran drop Nair when he was on 31. The missed opportunity proved costly as the experienced batsman capitalised on it to reach his well-compiled century.

Malewar, who had already made a significant contribution in the first innings with 153 runs, played a solid supporting role, scoring 73 before his dismissal just before the tea break. Kerala bowlers, despite maintaining discipline, struggled to find breakthroughs on a pitch offering little assistance.

With only one day left in India's domestic season, Vidarbha hold the upper hand, needing to bat out a portion of the final day to all but seal the prestigious Ranji Trophy title. Kerala, on the other hand, face an uphill task of pulling off a miraculous turnaround.

The final day's play will resume at 9:30 am, where Vidarbha will look to extend their lead further and cement their dominance in this high-stakes encounter.

Nasser Hussain backs Harry Brook as England's next white-ball captain

AGENCIES

NEW DELHI, MARCH 1

Former England captain Nasser Hussain has thrown his support behind Harry Brook to take over as England's next white-ball captain, urging the team to make the transition "as soon as possible."

Hussain's comments come in the wake of Jos Buttler stepping down from the role following England's disappointing group-stage exit in the ICC Champions Trophy.

Buttler, who succeeded Eoin Morgan in 2022, endured a tough stint as skipper, losing 22 of his 34 ODIs as permanent captain. England's struggle in white-ball cricket have been evident, with their early exit in the Champions Trophy following a group-stage elimination in the 2023 ODI World Cup and an unconvincing semi-final run in the 2024 T20 World Cup.



Advertisement

Brook, a rising star in England's batting lineup, is viewed as the natural successor. Hussain believes that if England sees him as the future captain, they should hand him the responsibility immediately rather than delaying the decision.

"Harry Brook is the obvious candidate to take over. He did it at the end of the summer against Australia," Hussain told Sky Sports. "With the

amount of important cricket coming up for England, you have to ask whether you want to put that pressure on a young man who has an India series at home, an Ashes away, and then a T20 World Cup in India and Sri Lanka. Or do you go with a stopgap option like James Vince, Sam Billings, or Lewis Gregory—experienced domestic and franchise captains?"

Despite concerns about the workload, Hussain

remains firm that England should look forward rather than opting for a short-term solution.

"I think England don't look back; they look forward. If they think Brook is the next captain, they should go to him as soon as possible so he can start learning. But obviously, the caveat is that it will put a lot on his plate."

Hussain also weighed in on Buttler's decision to step down, acknowledging the emotional toll it takes on a captain to relinquish their position. He emphasised that Buttler now has the opportunity to focus on regaining his best form, which has suffered since he took over the leadership role.

"It's always very sad when an England captain has to step down, and you could see how emotional Jos was walking out. It's the best job in the world until you have to give it away, and that moment really hurts," Hussain said.

Dhruv-Tanisha storm into German Open SFs

AGENCIES

MULHEIM AN DER RUHR (GERMANY), MAR 1 (UNI)

India's Dhruv Kapila and Tanisha Crasto stormed into the semifinals of the German Open 2025 badminton tournament after defeating the People's Republic of China's Gao Jia Xuan and Wu Meng Ying in straight games at the Westenergie Sporthalle on Friday.

Paris 2024 Olympian Tanisha Crasto and her



mixed doubles partner Dhruv Kapila displayed a commanding performance to oust the Chinese

duo 21-14, 21-17 in just 30 minutes.

Kapila and Crasto made a blistering start, surg-

ing to an 11-2 lead in the opening game. Although Gao and Wu staged a brief comeback to reduce the deficit to 13-10, the Indian pair swiftly reasserted their dominance to close out the first game.

The second game proved to be a tighter contest, with the Chinese pair putting up a spirited resistance. However, Kapila and Crasto held their nerve to seal the victory and secure a semi-final berth.

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