



BUDGET SESSION 2025:

## Premier Religious Tourism Circuit for J&K Soon : CM Omar Abdullah Efforts to boost Jammu's economy through tourism, heritage & pilgrimage promotion

■ HT News Network

**Jammu, Mar 04:** JAMMU, MARCH 04: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah today reaffirmed his government's commitment to promoting Jammu's religious tourism circuit to boost the region's economy.

Responding to a supplementary query by MLA Yudhvir Sethi in the Legislative Assembly, the Chief Minister, who also holds charge of the Tourism Department, stated that concerted efforts are being made to publicize every tourism asset in the region.

"The department is actively working on developing the Jammu pilgrimage circuit. I have repeatedly emphasized this to more than one crore Mata Vaishno Devi pilgrims. If even ten to fifteen percent of them can be encouraged to visit other tourist destinations in Jammu, it will significantly benefit the region. However, we have not been able to achieve this so far," he said.



He acknowledged that a key challenge is the lack of comprehensive information about Jammu's pilgrimage sites. "We aim to develop structured it

TURN ON.....PAGE 02

### DPR for Keran - Jungund tunnel to be prepared, taken up with MORTH : Deputy Chief Minister

■ HT News Network

**Srinagar, Mar 04:** The Deputy Chief Minister said that the demand for construction of tunnel on the road connecting Keran and Jungund area of Kupwara for providing all weather connectivity will be taken up with the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways, Government of India.



TURN ON.....PAGE 02

### Sakeena blames PDP for J&K losing statehood, Art 370

■ HT News Network

**Srinagar, Mar 04:** Blaming Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) for J&K losing statehood, scrapping of Article 370 and unemployment, Education Minister and senior National Conference (NC) leader, Sakeena Itoo on Tuesday said that the people have rejected the party for "betraying" them. Talking to reporters in the premises of Legislative Assembly



TURN ON.....PAGE 02

### 32474 posts vacant in departments: J&K Govt

■ HT News Network

**Srinagar, Mar 04:** Jammu, Mar 04: The Jammu & Kashmir Government on Tuesday informed the Legislative Assembly that a staggering 32,474 posts are lying vacant across different departments in Jammu & Kashmir. In a written response to a question of MLA Handwara, as per news agency— Chief Minister Omar Abdullah, who happens to be Minister in-charge, General Administration Department, said that 32474 posts are vacant in different departments as on January 31, 2025.

TURN ON.....PAGE 02

## Sajad Lone Stages walkout over disallowing of amendments relating to Article 370, PSA

"How can the Assembly keep quiet on the police verification system?"

■ HT News Network

**Jammu, Mar 04:** Peoples Conference president and MLA Handwara, Sajad Gani Lone on Tuesday walked out of Legislative Assembly after his amendments to the Lieutenant Governor's address were disallowed.

The Assembly witnessed exchange of words between Lone and the Speaker Abdul Rahim Rather after the former's amendments related to Article 370 and Article 35A were disallowed.

TURN ON.....PAGE 02



## "Development facilitated by China": CM Omar after BJP-NC spar over PoK remarks

■ HT News Network

**Jammu, Mar 4:** Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Tuesday said that the development seen in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) is primarily driven by China, with no significant role played by the Pakistan government in its progress.

Speaking in the Assembly, Omar Abdullah, as per news agency— made the statement after verbal exchange between members of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and the National Conference over the condition of border areas in the region.

"We have to accept that while there is limited development in our frontier areas, on the other side, there have been

deliberate attempts to showcase progress. However, this so-called development was facilitated by China, not Pakistan," he said.

He said that India has not sought assistance from any foreign country for infrastructure development in border regions. Criticising the portrayal of growth in PoK, he remarked, "They (PoK) made

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## No Creation/ Upgradation of Health Centers Planned: J&K Govt

■ HT News Network

**Srinagar, Mar 04:** The Jammu & Kashmir Government informed the Legislative Assembly on Tuesday that J&K has a health institution for every 3,500 souls, compared to the national average of 6,000 souls.

In a written reply to an unstarred question by MLA Reyaz Ahmed Khan, as reported by the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), the Minister in-charge of

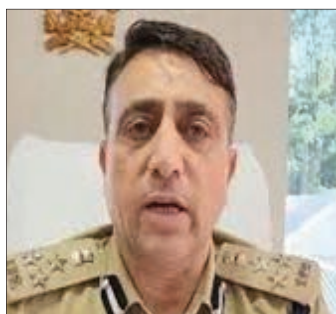
TURN ON.....PAGE 02

## Undisclosed properties linked to drug trade to be seized: DIG North Kashmir

■ HT News Network

**Bandipora, Mar 04** Deputy Inspector General of Police north Kashmir, Maqsood-Ul-Zaman on Tuesday said that undisclosed properties of drug peddlers are being identified and will be seized soon.

Speaking to reporters in Sumbal, the DIG, as per news agency—



said that the drug menace has deep roots in the society, which is why it remains police's priority. "We have taken significant steps in north Kashmir, including large recoveries and action against key figures involved in drug trafficking," he said.

He said that properties linked to drug money had been seized.

TURN ON.....PAGE 02

## J&K wetland mapping on, will be completed by March end: Forest Minister

■ HT News Network

**Srinagar, Mar 04:** Forest Minister Javid Ahmad Rana on Tuesday said that the mapping and demarcation of wetlands in Jammu and Kashmir is expected to be completed by the end of this month.

In a written reply to a question by Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) MLA Waheed ur Rehman Para, who sought details on the government's efforts to protect and pre-



serve the region's depleting wet

TURN ON.....PAGE 02

## 2,548.75 hectares of saffron land rejuvenated under National Mission on Saffron: Javed Dar

■ HT News Network

**JAMMU, MARCH 4:** Minister for Agriculture Production, Javed Ahmad Dar Tuesday informed that the National Mission on Saffron has made significant advancements, particularly strengthening of the irrigation system, rejuvenating 2,548.75 hectares of saffron land.

The Minister while replying to a question by Justice Hasnain Masoodi in the Legislative Assembly further said that the Government has successfully halted decline in saffron area and area under this crop has remained at 3,715 hectares (3665 Ha in Kashmir division and 50 Ha in Kishtwar) since 2010-11, with more areas identified for expansion supported by HADP. He further said that the productivity has enhanced from 2.50 kg/ha in 2009-10 to a maximum recorded

TURN ON.....PAGE 02

## JKPCC chief clarifies: Post-SC verdict, special status for Congress means statehood

■ HT News Network

**Jammu, Mar 04:** Jammu and Kashmir Pradesh Congress Committee (JKPCC) president Tariq Hameed Karra on Tuesday said that for the Congress party, the concept of special status for Jammu and Kashmir, post the Supreme Court verdict, translates to full statehood.

Speaking to reporters outside



the Assembly in Jammu, Karra, according to the news agency— said, "For Congress, after the

Supreme Court's verdict, if there is any possibility of special status, it is statehood. That remains our primary demand, and we will continue to stand by it."

The JKPCC chief called for clarity on the demand for special status, saying that different political parties interpret the term differently. "Clarity is needed on what special status we are seeking. Different parties have different inter

TURN ON.....PAGE 02

## Chief Secretary calls for enhanced credit access, investment in J&K's rural sector at NABARD seminar NABARD estimates 43,297 cr credit potential for priority sector in 2025-26

■ HT News Network

**JAMMU, MARCH 4:** Stressing the need for financial inclusion and targeted credit support to the farmers, entrepreneurs and rural businesses, Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo, today called upon the banks to expand their outreach and ensure universal access to financial schemes.

The Chief Secretary was speaking at the UT Credit Seminar organised by the National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD), where the bank unveiled an estimated 43,297.01 crore credit potential for Jammu and Kashmir's priority sector for 2025-26.



The seminar, held in Jammu, was attended by Chan-

drashekhar Azad, Regional Director, Reserve Bank of India (RBI), Amitava Chatterjee, MD & CEO, J&K Bank and other senior officials from the government departments and the financial institutions.

Delivering the keynote address, the Chief Secretary lauded NABARD's efforts in credit planning and timely release of the UT Focus Paper, which highlights funding priorities for agriculture, MSMEs and rural infrastructure.

"The government is committed towards expanding financial access across all Panchayats, ensuring that every eligible farmer benefits from the Kisan Credit Card (KCC) and Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima

TURN ON.....PAGE 02

## LG releases two books

■ HT News Network

**Srinagar, Mar 04:** Lieutenant Governor Shri Manoj Sinha today released a book titled 'Rishton Ke Bheeg Akhbaar (Ghazal Sangrah)' written by Dr Anila Singh Charak.

The Lieutenant Governor congratulated the author and wished her success in the future literary endeavours. Lieutenant Governor also released a book titled 'Jammu: A Land of Heritage and Legends, Volume-I', authored by Ajay Khajuria, Professor of Practice at MIET, Jammu. The Lieutenant Governor congratulated and extended his best wishes to the author. The book offers deep insights into Jammu's vibrant heritage, traditions, and architectural marvels—

TURN ON.....PAGE 02

## Waheed Para Slams Deputy CM Surinder Chaudhary for 'Political Opportunism'

■ HT News Network

**Srinagar, Mar 5:** PDP leader Waheed ur Rehman Para has launched a scathing attack on Jammu and Kashmir Deputy Chief Minister Surinder Chaudhary, accusing him of blatant political opportunism and self-serving alliances.

Para criticized Chaudhary's shifting loyalties, highlighting how he once vehemently opposed the National Conference but now aligns with the party for political survival. "He built his career attacking NC, calling it the root of Kashmir's problems. Today, he sits comfortably in power under Omar Abdullah, proving his only commitment is to himself," Para stated.

TURN ON.....PAGE 02

## Pulwama hospital decongested: Dermatology, Homeopathy OPDs shifted to Prichoo facility

■ HT News Network

**Srinagar March 04:** In a move to decongest District Hospital Pulwama, authorities have decided to shift the Dermatology and Homeopathy Outpatient Departments (OPDs) to the COVID Care Hospital in Prichoo, Pulwama.

Some non-emergency services were already shifted to the COVID Care Hospital in Prichoo last year. A health official speaking to the news agency—said that District

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CONTINUE FROM FRONT PAGE.....

CM

ineraries for three-day, four-day, and seven-day pilgrimage tours and promote them effectively. We will ensure widespread distribution of promotional literature at trade and tourism fairs to attract visitors,” he added.

Addressing concerns about the impact of direct train connectivity to Kashmir and the Delhi-Amritsar-Katra Expressway by passing Jammu, the Chief Minister acknowledged the apprehensions of the local tourism industry. “There is concern that with the railway now extending not just to Katra but also to Srinagar and Baramulla and with the expressway allowing travelers to bypass Jammu City, tourism in Jammu may be affected. However, developing tourism destinations alone is not enough. Sites like Jammu’s heritage landmarks, the upcoming Jammu lake, and the Jammu zoo are significant attractions, but they need better branding and visibility,” he said.

“We must give these destinations a distinct identity and promote them effectively. It is true that there has not been adequate publicity so far, but we are committed to addressing this,” he asserted.

Earlier, in response to a starred question of the Legislator, the Chief Minister highlighted the ongoing efforts of the Tourism Department in developing infrastructure to attract more tourists to Jammu City.

“Several projects have been implemented under the State Capex Budget and Swadesh Darshan Scheme,” he informed the House.

Among the notable projects undertaken, the government has focused on enhancing major tourist attractions.

A musical water fountain with a sound and light show has been installed at Bagh-e-Bahu to enrich visitor experiences.

Additionally, tourist facilities have been developed at Bhagwati Nagar and Sidhra Golf Course to accommodate and attract more travelers.

Further, an amusement park has been constructed near the Sidhra Golf Course in Jammu to provide more recreational options. To improve connectivity, the much-anticipated ropeway project from Mohmaya to Bagh-e-Bahu has been implemented, offering tourists a scenic and efficient travel option.

The Jammu Smart City Limited (JSCL) is also spearheading multiple initiatives to modernize Jammu’s infrastructure and enhance its appeal as a tourist destination.

As part of its heritage conservation and beautification efforts, JSCL has undertaken the restoration and beautification of iconic landmarks such as Bahu Fort, Mubarak Mandi, Raghunath Bazaar, and various temples and ghats under the Smart City initiative.

To improve urban mobility and accessibility, major road upgrades are underway, along with the development of pedestrian-friendly pathways. In a bid to promote sustainable transportation, the city has introduced electric buses under the eBus project, making public transport more eco-friendly.

A key initiative under JSCL is the redevelopment of the Tawi Riverfront, transforming it into a vibrant recreational hub with promenades, cycling tracks, and leisure spaces for residents and tourists alike.

Furthermore, heritage sites such as Bahu Fort, the Army Headquarters at Mubarak Mandi, Maha Maya Temple, and Tawi bridges have been enhanced with façade lighting, adding to their visual appeal.

To make historical and cultural experiences more engaging, the government has also introduced digital and immersive light and sound shows at Bahu Fort heritage sites.

The Chief Minister emphasized that JSCL’s vision aligns with making Jammu a modern, tourist-friendly, and sustainable city while preserving its rich cultural and historical essence.

DYCM

He said DPR would also be prepared and forwarded to concerned.

The Deputy Chief Minister was replying to a question raised by Mir Saifullah.

The Deputy Chief Minister said that Keran sector is connected with the rest of UT of J&K via Pharkiyān Gali to Keran road (46.76 Km), maintained by BRO.

He further said that the road remains partially closed during the winter season due to snow accumulation and regular snow clearance is being done by BRO for providing connectivity to Keran sector.

“The PMGSY Road Zirhama-Jumgund (length 25.00 km) is a high-altitude road. Snow clearance operations though carried out regularly but during heavy snow spells clearance operation becomes difficult beyond first 6 km and gets temporarily delayed till weather improves due to poor visibility, frost action, avalanches/ snow slides from upper reaches, especially in kms from 17th to 20th”, he added.

The Deputy Chief Minister further informed that no alternate roads are available at present for the Keran and Jumgund areas. He said Pharkiyān Gali to Keran (46.76 Km) road is maintained by BRO.

2,548.75 hectares of saffron land rejuvenated under National Mission on Saffron: Javed Dar

The Minister for Agriculture Production, Javed Ahmad Dar today informed that the National Mission on Saffron has made significant advancements, particularly strengthening of the irrigation system, rejuvenating 2,548.75 hectares of saffron land.

The Minister while replying to a question by Justice Hasnain Masoodi in the Legislative Assembly further said that the Government has successfully halted decline in saffron area and area under this crop has remained at 3,715 hectares (3665 Ha in Kashmir division and 50 Ha in Kishtwar) since 2010-11, with more areas identified for expansion supported by HADP. He further said that the productivity has enhanced from 2.50 kg/ha in 2009-10 to a maximum recorded productivity of 4.42 kg/ha in rejuvenated areas during 2023.

He said that the National Mission on Saffron initiated a plan to construct a network of 124 community bore-wells. Each bore-well is intended to serve an area of 30 hectares, connected to sprinkler irrigation systems designed to support the irrigation needs of a total of 3,665 hectares of saffron fields.

He further informed that 85 bore-wells have been handed over to the Agriculture Department, however, efforts to construct the remaining 39 bore-wells have faced significant obstacles. Despite multiple invitations for tenders, there has been consistently poor participation in the tendering process. This lack of response has resulted in a substantial delay in further developing the necessary irrigation infrastructure.

He said that the Committee formed by the Government has found that 77 bore-wells are not functional for a long time.

The Minister said that a 400 Crore project had been sanctioned during 2010-11 by Ministry of Agriculture and Corporation, Government of India for boosting Saffron production and economic revival.

He further informed that the establishment of Saffron Park/IIKSTC has helped farmers realize enhanced prices, increasing from Rs. 80,000 per kg to Rs. 2,20,000 per kg during 2021-22. Implementation of various scientific post-harvest processing methods increased saffron stigma recovery from 22g/kg to 28g/kg (an increase of 6g/kg) during 2021-22.

Through the mission, new technologies were implemented via Indian Institute of Kashmir Saffron and Technology Center (IIKSTC), leading to an increase in saffron colour quality from 8 percent (traditional drying) to 16 percent (scientific drying), the minister added.

He further said that the Mission addressed the issue of intermediaries exploiting saffron growers by implementing e-auctions at IIKSTC. This ensured fair farm-gate prices and enabled transparent transactions across India, effectively reducing the influence of intermediaries.

The Minister said that the Agriculture Department has made concerted efforts to combat disruptive activities of un-desirable element among the saffron growing farmers which included damaging of sprinkler irrigation systems/bore-wells. The presence of Real-Estate players/land grabbers pose a significant threat to the success of saffron cultivation, in the area, complaints have also been lodged with the concerned revenue officials, he added.

SAKEENA

complex here, ltoo, as per the news agency—said, “People will never repose their trust in PDP again. In the recent elections, people have reduced their number to just three MLAs.”

She said, “People gave two chances to PDP one in 2002 and another in 2014 but on both the occasions party betrayed their trust.”

The Minister said, “People are regretting giving chances to the PDP. The party is responsible for the mess Jammu and Kashmir is witnessing.”

Referring to the health sector in the Union Territory, ltoo said, “There is dearth of doctors and paramedical staff, but the government under the leadership of Chief Minister Omar Abdullah has been taking every possible measure to ensure better healthcare facilities to the people.”

“The previous regime remained confined to laying foundation stones and cutting ribbons, however, what we have achieved in the last three months, they (previous government) would not have done it in ten years,” she said—(KNO)

VACANCY

Of these, 2,503 are gazetted posts, 19,214 are non-gazetted posts, and 10,757 are multi-tasking staff positions, the CM said.

The highest number of posts are vacant in the Health Department, with 7,851 vacancies.

It is followed by the Health & Medical Education department and Animal & Sheep Husbandry Department with 3759 and 2589 vacancies, respectively.

According to the reply, there are 2517 vacancies in the Industries & Commerce Department and 2420 in Housing & Urban Development Department.

In the past four months, the Government informed that 3727 vacancies have been

referred to Public Service Commission and Services Selection Board since October 16, 2024, the day when Omar Abdullah-led government took oath.

Of these, 738 are gazetted posts, 1754 non-gazetted posts and 1235 multi-tasking slots.

The Government also revealed that it has no proposal to make job application forms free for job aspirants.

“Presently, no such proposal is under consideration in the Government,” it said.

In the past four months, the government revealed that it has collected Rs 14. 17 crore examination fee from students appearing in recruiting tests conducted by SSB and PSC.

In its election manifesto for last year’s assembly polls, the National Conference had promised to make job application forms free for all the examinations.

“The job application will be made free for all the examinations,” the party had promised in its manifesto—(KNO)

SAJAD LONE

Lone’s amendments related to the repeal of the Public Safety Act, the shifting back of PSA detainees lodged outside J&K, and a probe into the rigging of the 1987 election were also disallowed by the Speaker.

After the Question Hour ended, Lone, as per news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), stood up and questioned the Speaker over rejection of his amendments.

Contesting the Speaker’s claim that he had disallowed the amendment because it was identical to the resolution brought by the National Conference-led government last year, Lone said there was no match between the two.

Lone said there was no mention of Article 370 or August 5, 2019 events or even Jammu & Kashmir Reorganisation Act-2019 in the resolution passed by NC-led government in the last session “Your resolution is like a marriage invitation card in which neither the names of the bride is written nor the name of groom is mentioned,” Lone said.

Further questioning the NC’s resolution, Lone said,” The special status doesn’t mean Article 370. The special status doesn’t cover what has been done to us on August 5, 2019. The special status could also mean a Union Territory. Are we fighting for a UT?” he asked.

Lone also contested the Speaker’s ruling on disallowing his amendment for a probe into 1987 election rigging.

“We are unable to come out of 1987. We are trapped in 1987. The rigging of the 1987 election brought violence. One lakh people died,” Lone said.

The Speaker disallowed the amendment, saying the 1987 election is not a matter of recent occurrence.

On rejection of amendments related to PSA and police verification, the Speaker said that these matters fall under the purview of Union Home Ministry.

“I am not saying that you should pass law on PSA. You should mention in the LG address that you have a desire to repeal the PSA,” Lone responded.

Responding to Lone’s claim, the Speaker said the PSA cannot be repealed until statehood is restored.

Lone said how the Assembly can remain quiet on “stringent police verification procedures.

“We want our children shouldn’t be punished for what their father or brother or cousin has done? It is primitive. How can we allow this? How can this Assembly keep quiet?” he asked,

POK

people wear coats to create the facade of development. However, in reality, the pockets of those coats are empty,” he said—(KNO)

GOVT

Health & Medical Education, Sakeena Masood ltoo, informed the House that according to a report published by the Union Ministry of Health & Medical Education, J&K has a health institution for every 3,500 souls, significantly better than the national average of 6,000 souls. The Minister also informed the House that there are currently 554 New Type Primary Health Centers (NTPHCs) in Jammu and Kashmir. She added that 523 out of these 554 NTPHCs have been converted into Health & Wellness Centers under a flagship scheme launched by the Government of India.

The Minister stated that no future creation or upgradation of health centers is planned at the moment.

However, this might be reconsidered once the austerity measures imposed by the Finance Department are withdrawn, and any critical gaps as per the Indian Public Health Standards (IPHS) are assessed—(KNO)

RANA

lands over the past two years, Rana, according to the news agency—said, “The Forest Department has initiated the mapping of wetlands using remote sensing data, along with ground truthing and demarcation, in collaboration with revenue and wildlife departments. This is being done for wetlands above 2.25 hectares, following Supreme Court

directions.”

He further mentioned that, as per the Wetlands (Conservation and Management Rules), 2017, brief documents for six wetlands have been prepared by the respective district working groups.

Among these, four wetlands—Ahansur-Waskursar Wetland Complex, Sanasar Lake, Khushalsar and Gilsar Lake, and Anchar and Rakh-i-Kujar—are nearly finalized, while documents for Manasbal Lake and Narkara remain under review by the technical committee.

Also, district wetland management units, led by the respective deputy commissioners, were established on December 19 to oversee the protection and conservation of wetlands—(KNO)

JKPCC

pretations, but for Congress, post the Supreme Court verdict, it is statehood,” he said.

When asked whether Congress would push for Article 371, Karra avoided referencing specific provisions but called for securing constitutional safeguards. “It is not about numbers. What matters is ensuring protection for land, jobs and natural resources,” he said.

The J&K Congress chief also criticised the government for failing to provide a clear timeline for the restoration of Jammu and Kashmir’s statehood, saying that the Vision Document lacks specifics on the matter.

He said that while the government has mentioned statehood, the process and time-frame remain vague. “There is no clarity on when or how statehood will be restored. This is a crucial issue that needs immediate attention,” he asserted.

Responding to People’s Democratic Party’s criticism that the document offers nothing significant to revive businesses, Karra distanced the Congress from PDP’s stance. “That is their issue. We have our own priorities,” he said—(KNO)

CS

Yojana (PMFBY),” maintained the Chief Secretary. He urged the banks to encourage timely loan repayments and actively participate in government-backed initiatives such as YUVA, aimed at promoting entrepreneurship among youth.

Highlighting the challenges in agriculture financing, Dulloo emphasised the need for capital investment in modern farming techniques. He asked the banks to adopt innovative financial models to support small and marginal farmers in areas such as farm mechanisation and modern irrigation, horticulture expansion including apple, walnut and saffron cultivation and post-harvest processing and market linkages.

“Investment in agriculture processing has already shown promising results, with milk production increasing by 20 percent. The need of the hour is to integrate the technology and financial support to enhance productivity further,” asserted the Chief Secretary.

The Chief Secretary called for greater banking support to Self Help Groups (SHGs). “Empowering rural women through financial inclusion and micro-enterprise development will drive sustainable economic growth,” he remarked. He urged NABARD and banks to intensify training and capacity building efforts for women entrepreneurs in rural areas.

Beyond agriculture, the Chief Secretary highlighted tourism as a key growth driver for Jammu and Kashmir’s economy. “With over 2 crore tourists annually, we must invest in infrastructure, connectivity and sustainable tourism projects,” he said. He added that the government is working on master plans to develop new tourist destinations while strengthening transport and minor irrigation facilities to support rural livelihoods.

Acknowledging the progress in financial linkages, the Chief Secretary called for greater integration of digital banking and loan disbursement mechanisms to enhance transparency. “Common Service Centres (CSCs), online loan processing and financial ‘touch points’ will ensure that banking reaches the remotest areas efficiently,” he asserted.

Dulloo also underscored the importance of social security schemes, such as PM Jan Dhan Yojana, PM Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana and PM Suraksha Bima Yojana in providing financial stability to rural populations.

On the occasion, the Chief Secretary released a compendium titled “Transforming the Rural Landscape of J&K and Ladakh”, showcasing NABARD’s interventions in the region, along with a booklet on Indicative Unit Costs for Agriculture & Allied Activities (2025-26). These documents serve as crucial references for policymakers, financial institutions and rural entrepreneurs.

The event concluded with Vikas Mittal, General Manager, NABARD, extending vote of thanks. “With the continued support of the UT Government and banking stakeholders, NABARD will strive to achieve the targets highlighted by the chief guest,” he affirmed.

The UT Credit Seminar served as a vital platform for the government officials, bankers and industry experts to collaborate on strategies for strengthening rural credit access and economic growth in Jammu and Kashmir.

JAVID DAR

productivity of 4.42 kg/ha in rejuvenated areas during 2023.

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PARRA

Recalling Chaudhary’s past admiration for Mehbooba Mufti, Para noted that he once hailed her as a fearless leader but now works tirelessly to discredit her. He also accused NC of failing to take a firm stand against the abrogation of Article 370, unlike Mufti, who remained defiant despite facing prolonged detention.

Para further alleged that Chaudhary has prioritized his association with the liquor lobby over addressing key issues like unemployment and economic distress. “J&K deserves leaders with principles, not politicians who sell their convictions for power,” he said. [KNT]

DIG NORTH

“We have already acted on four properties acquired through drug proceeds, and investigations are ongoing. We are tracing both forward and backward linkages to identify and seize assets accumulated by drug peddlers and kingpins under different names,” he stated.

Speaking about new criminal laws, he said that the laws that have been introduced are focused on victims. “We met the public today to inform them about these laws, as their successful implementation depends on public awareness.”

He added that the police discussed key legal provisions such as zero FIRs, digital FIRs, and the distribution of proceeds of crime to victims—(KNO)

PULWAMA

Hospital Pulwama experiences a heavy patient influx, with 2,000-3,000 people visiting daily. “To manage the overwhelming patient load, non-emergency services were relocated to Prichoo, a facility that was previously used during the COVID-19 pandemic,” he said. The official added that the Psychiatry, Mental Health, Addiction Treatment Facility, and Dental sections were shifted to Prichoo last year and have been functioning smoothly since then. “To manage the overwhelming patient load, non-emergency services were relocated to Prichoo, a facility that was previously used during the COVID-19 pandemic,” he said. The official added that the Psychiatry, Mental Health, Addiction Treatment Facility, and Dental sections were shifted to Prichoo last year and have been functioning smoothly since then.

Public Notice

I have changed my name From (Old name).... MARROUSH ASHRAF DAR TO New Name MARROUSH ASHRAF .In future I will be known as (New name)..... MARROUSH ASHRAF.

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.  
**Name:-MARROUSH ASHRAF**



■ **HT News Network**

At the outset, DivCom reviewed arrangements regarding arrival of participants at Srinagar Airport, transportation of



participants, accommodation facilities and essential services including electricity, drinking water, sanitation, Mobile Network, critical health services and mobile recovery vans.

He impressed on close coordination and synergy among all the departments besides called for effective communication among the stakeholders.

The Div Com called for flawless arrange-

ments at the venue, and ensuring smooth conduct of the prestigious sporting event. The officers briefed the meeting regarding the latest and overall preparations pertaining to their respective departments for smooth conduct of national sports event. Deputy Commissioner Baramulla, Director Tourism, Director Urban Local Bodies, Director Health Services Kashmir, CEO Gulmarg Development Authority, Secretary J&K Sports Council, officers from various departments including SMC, PHE, KPDCI, R&B, MED, Transport, Airport Authority, Cable Car Corporation, Information, KTDC, H&H, NHIDCL, Police, SDRF, CISF, HAWS and other stakeholders attended the meeting. At the outset, Div Com reviewed arrangements regarding arrival of participants at Srinagar Airport, transportation of participants, accommodation facilities and essential services including electricity, drinking water, sanitation, Mobile Network, critical health services and mobile recovery vans.

■ HT News Network

The online application submission has started from March 1, 2025 and will end on March 22, 2025 (up to 11:50 PM). For further details, the students can log onto university website [www.cukashmir.ac.in](http://www.cukashmir.ac.in) or CUET Official Website: <https://cuet.nta.nic.in>. The aspirants can also call on University Helpline: 9469147277 / 7889593153 from (10:00 AM - 5:00 PM)

■ HT News Network

National Conference MLA Pampore Hasnain Masoodi, backed by MLA Kulgam Muhammad Yousuf Tarigami, raised concerns over alleged irregularities in the implementation of the ambitious scheme aimed at boosting saffron production in Kashmir. They urged the government to order a probe to ascertain if funds were misused or the project was mishandled.

Responding to the allegations, Agriculture Minister Javed Dar acknowledged the concerns and assured the House that the department was examining the matter. "If needed, a departmental inquiry will be ordered," he said.

The National Saffron Mission was launched in 2010 by the then UPA government under the leadership of Manmohan Singh to revive saffron cultivation in Kashmir. The multi-crore initiative sought to introduce modern techniques, improve irrigation facilities, and enhance overall saffron yield. However, reports of project failures, mismanagement of funds, and failure to achieve the desired results have raised doubts over its execution. [KNT]

■ HT News Network

Srinagar, March 4 (KNS): Residents of several villages in Mawar, Handwara have expressed concern over unscheduled power cuts, making daily life difficult, especially during the holy month of Ramadan. Despite paying regular electricity bills, locals say they are not receiving power as per the official schedule.

Villages including Audoora, Qalamabad, Drungsoo, Nowgam, Lawoosa, Shahrama, Warpora, Khudi, Hari, Jahama, Mawer Bala, and Lach Shartgund Bala are among the affected areas. Residents allege that the employees of the Arampora Grid Station and Receiving Station Audoora Qalamabad are deliberately causing disruptions, leaving people to struggle, particularly during Sehri and Iftar. Bashir Ahmad, a resident of Audoora, said that despite paying his electricity bills on time, the supply remains erratic. "We hardly get electricity for 10 minutes to an hour in 24 hours. This is causing immense hardship, especially during Ramadan and students' examination time," he said.

■ **HT News Network**

The program was chaired by DIG North Kashmir Range, Maqsood Ul Zaman, with SSP Bandipora, Harmeet Singh, and other senior police officers also present.

A large gathering of youth and local residents actively participated in the session.

■ **HT News Network**

Srinagar, March 4: President of Jammu and Kashmir Peoples Democratic Front (J&K PDF) and former minister, Hakeem Muhammad Yaseen, on Tuesday asserted that further engagement with stakeholders for the restoration of J&K's statehood is unnecessary. In a statement issued to media he said that the decisive mandate given in the 2024 Assembly elections to a particular political party was explicitly for the restoration of Jammu and Kashmir's constitutional guarantees, particularly the return of its statehood.

Senior PDF leader Hakeem Yaseen urged the Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, and Home Minister Amit Shah to set a clear timeframe for restoring statehood to J&K, stressing that any delay would be seen as a deliberate attempt to prolong the current proxy administration. He emphasized that Jammu and Kashmir was a thriving state until 2019 but was unjustly downgraded and divided against the will of its people. Hakeem asserted that the people's desire for statehood was clearly reflected in the assembly elections, where a particular party received a decisive mandate based on its commitment to restoring J&K's constitutional position. He appealed to the central leadership to respect the 2024 mandate and take immediate steps to reinstate statehood, rather than engaging in prolonged discussions with so-called stakeholders to delay the process.

**Directs all line departments to ensure maximum outreach and citizens registration on the portal**

**HT News Network**

**SRINAGAR, MARCH 04:** In order to review the progress of the registration process under the JK Samadhan Portal, a meeting was held under the chairmanship of the Deputy Commissioner (DC) Srinagar, Dr. Bilal Mohi-Ud-Din Bhat here at Meeting Hall of the DC Office Complex, today. At the outset, the DC highlighted the significance of registrations on The JK Samadhan Portal. He said it is a Government initiative aimed at streamlining and simplifying grievance redressal processes, designed to ensure transparency, accountability and efficiency in addressing public complaints.

On the occasion, Dr Bilal stressed the Officers to sensitize the masses about the The JK Samadhan Portal and prioritize registering citizens on the portal. He emphasized the importance of timely and efficient registration of grievances, which can be accessed and resolved through the portal. He underscored the importance of the portal in facilitating citizen's access to Government services and resolving grievances.



The DC directed all the line departments to ensure maximum outreach and participation in the portal's registration process. CSC VLEs were directed to register a maximum number of people under the portal who are unable to register themselves.

During the meeting, the DC directed for establishing a special Control Room at DC Office to monitor the department wise progress of registrations on The JK Samadhan Portal. He also set targets to each concerned depart-

ment to ensure all the citizens are registered on the portal at the earliest. The meeting was attended by Additional Deputy Commissioner, Syed Ahmad Kataria; Chief Planning Officer, Secretary SMC, Chief Medical Officer, Chief Agriculture Officer, Tehsildars, BDOs, AD FCS&CA, CDPOs, District Coordinator CSC and other District Officers. On the occasion, Dr Bilal stressed the Officers to sensitize the masses about the The JK Samadhan Portal and prioritize.

■ HT News Network

The workshop proceedings were initiated by Dr Mohammad Rafiq Teli by welcoming participants from various universities across J&K. This workshop is aimed to provide participants with comprehensive training in various research methodologies, data analysis techniques, and academic writing, he said.

In her inaugural address, Head HSS&M, Dr. Jaya Shrivastava said that the workshop is a crucial step in our commitment to fostering a strong research culture. We aim to empower scholars with the skills needed to conduct rigorous and impactful research in their respective fields, she said.

Dr Java said that in today's world, where



technological advancements are reshaping societies, the role of humanities, social sciences and management has become more critical than ever.

"Our department not only complements the technical disciplines at NIT Srinagar but also equips students with critical thinking, ethical reasoning, communication, and leadership skills that are essen-

tial in academia, industry, and policy making. Through rigorous research and teaching, we prepare students to address contemporary global challenges with innovative and socially responsible solutions," she said.

Dr Jaya further said that research is the backbone of academic progress, and its credibility hinges on rigorous methodol-

ogy. She also acknowledged the instrumental support of Director NIT Srinagar Prof. Binod Kanauiya, Registrar Prof. Atik-ur-Rehman, and Dean Research and Consultancy Prof. Roohie Naaz in making the workshop possible.

Dr. Tahir Ahmad Wani and Dr. Mohammad Rafiq Teli are the convenors, while Dr. Nufazil Altaf, Dr. Sumaira Jan, Dr. Ajaz Ul Islam, and Dr. Shahnawaz Ahmed are coordinators of the workshop.

Dr. Tahir Ahmad Wani led the first session, highlighting various aspects of research methodology. He said this workshop provides a crucial platform for scholars to refine their skills, ensuring their research not only meets rigorous academic standards but also addresses pressing societal challenges.

Dr. Ajaz Ul Islam conducted the second session. He said the weeklong workshop is designed to provide practical insights and hands-on experience, empowering participants to conduct impactful and ethically sound research.



## EDITORIAL

## Penalize doctors for not implementing government orders

People in general and patients in particular have been complaining that they are not able to understand the names of the medicines prescribed by a doctor while writing a prescription. It was in this context that some years back the department of health and medical education in Jammu & Kashmir had directed the doctors to write the prescription in bold and capital letters so that it is readable to all.

Like most of the other government orders this order too was not followed in principle by the concerned stakeholders. Most of the medicos gave a damn to this order and continued with the practice of writing the prescription in small and non-readable letters. Following this laxity the High Court of Jammu & Kashmir had to intervene in the matter and issue directions in this regard. Still then there was no difference with the doctors continuing with their own method of writing a prescription?

In a latest instance the Directorate of Health Services, Kashmir issued a fresh order on February 1 this year asking the doctors posted in the government sector to write the prescription in bold and capital letters. Following this the Directorate of Health Services, Jammu issued an order on March 1 asking the chief medical officers and superintendents of the hospitals to ensure the directions issued with respect to this issue are implemented. It remains to be seen how far the orders issued by the Directorates are followed by the medicos.

Some of the people opine that the doctors under a deliberate plan write the prescription in small letters so that it is readable to the chemist only and not to the general masses even though they are highly qualified. Given the fact that the government has been stressing on the procurement of generic medicines and not branded ones over the past few years there is a strong feeling that the doctors want to sabotage the same by writing the names of branded medicines in small letters.

There is a strong feeling that there is a lack of awareness when it comes to the significance of generic medicines in treating diseases and disorders. The people as a whole want to continue with the brand of medicines they have been using for years and are not ready to switch over to generic medicines. The chemists for their own benefits also don't encourage the patients to take up the generic medicines and virtually impose the branded medicines on the patients.

## Basil seeds



**SAHIL MANZOOR**  
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Every edible has unique and different nutrient values. Our body needs all the essential components of food like minerals, fats, proteins, vitamins, carbohydrates and water, every eatable has its own importance in terms of its composition. Our body needs a balanced diet for its proper and normal functioning, like we have to eat/consume all the basic components of food for proper growth and for wellbeing.

At the same time Muslims across the world practicing fasting in the holy month of Ramadhan (Ramzan in arabic), the fasting starts with dawn and end up with dusk, muslims have faith and believe that fasting cleans our body and purifies and bestows the spirituality to the soul. During ramadhan month only two meals been done one at the Sehri time and second at the Iftar in

between Sehri and Iftar all the food items are prohibited to eat. Charity given to needy people, prayers are being performed by all the muslims throughout the world during this holy month of Ramadhan muslims are fond of different dishes which are prepared at the time of iftar and Sehri time.

Now today I am going to enlighten the few benefits of basil seeds, commonly known as Babry Byoul in Kashmiri language. Babry Byoul is loaded with proteins, minerals, etc. many people don't get adequate amounts of calcium and magnesium, basil seeds could help them to get these essential minerals. Basil seeds help to clean our stomach, gut due to the presence of fibres in it. Basil seeds may help your cholesterol by inhibiting cholesterol absorption in your gut.

Basil seeds are rich in plant products like polyphenols and flavonoids. Flavonoids are antioxidants that protect your cells from damage by free radicals. These compounds have anti-inflammatory and anti-cancer properties. Preparation of basil seeds is very easy, basil seeds soaked into the water for 30 minutes, then add some sugar, coconut, milk for better taste. It will keep you hydrated and fill your stomach for a long period of time.

**KOUSAR AHMED RATHER**

Emphasising the urgent need to tackle rising obesity rates in India, the Prime Minister has called on nominated leaders to promote healthier lifestyles and combat the public health crisis affecting millions

Prime Minister Narendra Modi in his monthly "Man Ki Baat" broadcast has initiated a campaign against obesity. He nominated ten persons including the Chief Minister of our UT Jammu and Kashmir to join his campaign against obesity and requested them to nominate further ten persons each to take this fight forward. Obesity, a growing public health concern, occurs due to abnormal fat accumulation in the body. It can lead to serious health problems, such as heart disease, type-2 diabetes, high blood pressure, and some cancers. It can affect bone health and reproduction. It influences the quality of living, such as sleeping or moving.

India is experiencing a rapid increase in obesity rates, particularly in urban areas. Studies indicate that a substantial portion of the urban population is overweight or obese. India ranks among the top three countries globally with high numbers of obese people. Lifestyle changes, including sedentary behaviour and increased consumption of processed foods, contribute significantly to the rise in obesity. Economic growth and urbanization have led to changes in dietary habits, with a shift towards calorie-dense, nutrient-poor

foods. Abdominal obesity is highly prevalent in India, which is a very dangerous form of fat accumulation.

A significant finding is that over one billion people worldwide are now living with obesity. The prevalence of obesity has drastically increased since 1990, with adult obesity more than doubling and adolescent obesity quadrupling. A very large portion of the world's population is considered overweight. In 2022, 1 in 8 people globally were living with obesity. Billions of adults are overweight, with a substantial portion of those being obese. Children and adolescents are also significantly affected, with millions classified as overweight or obese. This widespread prevalence puts a massive strain on healthcare systems and contributes to numerous health complications.

Obesity is calculated by a tool called body mass index which estimates the body fat by using a person's weight and height. BMI is calculated by dividing the person's weight in kilograms by the square of height in meters. It is expressed in kg/m<sup>2</sup>. A BMI value between 18.5 to 25 kg/m<sup>2</sup> is considered a normal weight. A BMI value less than 18.5 kg/m<sup>2</sup> is considered underweight and a BMI value of 30 kg/m<sup>2</sup> or more is an indication of obesity. Waist circumference is a good indicator of abdominal fat. A waist circumference of 40 inches or more for men and 35 inches or more for women is considered obese.

Obesity is a complex health issue with multiple contributing factors.



Consuming more calories than the body burns leads to weight gain. This is often due to diets high in energy-dense foods, such as processed foods, fast food, and sugary drinks. Diets rich in saturated and trans fats, refined carbohydrates, and added sugars contribute to weight gain. Lack of fruits, vegetables, and whole grains reduces nutrient intake and can lead to overeating.

Modern lifestyles often involve prolonged periods of sitting, whether at work, school or during leisure time. Reduced physical activity decreases calorie expenditure, leading to weight gain. Changes in transportation, increased screen time, and reduced participation in sports and recreational activities contribute to lower activity levels.

Genes can influence an individual's susceptibility to obesity by affecting appetite, metabolism, and fat storage. However, genes do not solely determine obesity; environmental and behavioural factors also play a significant role. Easy access to high-calorie, unhealthy foods and limited access to healthy options can contribute to obesity.

Socioeconomic status can influence food choices,

access to healthcare, and opportunities for physical activity. Stress and emotional factors can also lead to overeating. Aggressive marketing of unhealthy foods, particularly to children, can influence dietary habits.

Some medical conditions, such as hypothyroidism, Cushing's syndrome, and polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS), can contribute to weight gain. Certain medications, including some antidepressants, steroids, and antipsychotics, can cause weight gain as a side effect.

Obesity has far-reaching effects on health, impacting nearly every system in the body. Excess weight puts extra strain on the heart, leading to elevated blood pressure. It can disrupt lipid levels, increasing "bad" cholesterol (LDL) and decreasing "good" cholesterol (HDL). These factors increase the risk of heart attacks, heart failure, and other cardiovascular problems. Obesity increases the risk of blood clot formation and arterial damage which contribute to a higher likelihood of stroke.

Obesity disrupts the body's ability to regulate blood sugar, leading to insulin resistance and type 2 diabetes. Excess

weight can obstruct the airways, leading to pauses in breathing during sleep.

Excess weight puts extra stress on joints, particularly the knees and hips, leading to cartilage breakdown and osteoarthritis. It can strain the back, causing chronic pain.

Obesity is associated with an increased risk of several cancers, including endometrial, breast, colon, kidney, liver, and pancreatic cancers.

Obesity increases the risk of gallstones and gallbladder disease. Excess fat accumulation in the liver can lead to inflammation and liver damage. (Non-alcoholic fatty disease). Increased abdominal pressure can cause stomach acid to flow back into the oesophagus (Gastroesophageal reflux disease)

Obesity can contribute to feelings of low self-esteem and depression. Body image concerns and social stigma can lead to anxiety.

Tackling obesity requires a multifaceted approach, addressing both individual behaviours and societal factors. There is a need to promote healthy eating habits by encouraging the eating of fruits, green leafy vegetables and salads. Limit intake of processed foods, sugary drinks, and saturated/trans fats. Promote mindful eating and portion control. Make healthy food options more accessible and affordable. Restrict the marketing of unhealthy foods, especially to children. Implement clear food labelling to help consumers make informed choices.

Encourage regular exercise by Promoting at least

150 minutes of moderate-intensity or 75 minutes of vigorous-intensity aerobic activity per week. Integrate physical activity into daily routines, such as walking or cycling. Develop safe and accessible spaces for physical activity, such as parks, bike lanes, and walking trails. Promote active transportation and reduce reliance on cars.

Provide individuals with personalized advice on diet, exercise, and behaviour modification. Address emotional eating and other psychological factors that contribute to obesity. Offer structured programmes that combine dietary changes, physical activity, and behavioural support.

Prescribe anti-obesity medications for individuals with significant health risks. Consider bariatric surgery for individuals with severe obesity who have not achieved success with other methods.

Implement policies to regulate the food industry, such as taxes on sugary drinks or restrictions on junk food advertising. Develop programmes that promote healthy lifestyles in schools, workplaces, and communities. Initiate public health campaigns to raise awareness about the risks of obesity and the benefits of healthy lifestyles.

By implementing a combination of these measures, we can create a healthier environment and help individuals achieve and maintain a healthy weight.

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## The role of AI in teaching future teachers

**MUHSIN AMEEN MALIK**

Can you tell me what it's like to teach or lecture? New technologies, especially AI, have made educators obsolete as the primary means of imparting information. Is this a sign that computers will soon be able to teach us all the material we need? Could AI eventually rule the world?

In 1956, during a two-month workshop at Dartmouth College in the US, John McCarthy initially introduced the phrase "artificial intelligence" (AI). In their 2019 study, Zawacki-Richter and colleagues provided evidence that AI had been considered even before this. As M.A. Turing expressed in his 1950 article Computing Machinery & Intelligence, "We can hope that machines will eventually compete with men in all purely intellectual fields." The fact that we encountered ChatGPT in 2022 suggests that his predictions were correct. Machine intelligence is another name for artificial intelligence (AI). A computer system acts as if it were a human brain. Whether we acknowledge it or not, artificial intelligence has become integral to our daily lives.

Task automation, tailored learning, universal access, smart content creation, teacher training, identifying classroom deficiencies, and 24/7 help are all areas where academics continuously strive to incorporate AI into education (The Seven Most Useful AI-Based Educational Tools, n.d.). The use of AI in the classroom has the potential to revolutionize teacher preparation and raise the bar for student learning. India has been a global leader in incorporating AI into classrooms, but there are challenges and opportunities to be aware of. When contrasted with other sectors like healthcare, manufacturing, and banking, the application of AI in the educational sector remains relatively modest. Using AI in teacher education has led to several evidence-based improve-

ments, which are presented in this study. A few examples of the many purposes served by these applications include providing in-service teachers with an introduction to artificial intelligence (AI), visualizing the behaviours and interactions of both pre- and in-service teachers, and automatically evaluating their video-based oral presentations.

Improving the Quality of Teacher Education

When it comes to enhancing the standard of teacher education, AI can be an indispensable tool. Smart information and communication technology (ICT) applications in India that aim to facilitate digital learning are increasingly incorporating AI features. Ensuring that educators are well-versed in the subjects they teach is a major challenge in teacher preparation programs. AI has the potential to provide educators with individualized access to high-quality learning materials and resources. Teachers can also benefit from AI's ability to identify knowledge gaps and offer constructive criticism.

To hone their teaching abilities, educators can consult AI. See how Google and OpenAI ChatGPT fare when you search for "ways to improve teaching skills" below.

Another way AI can improve education is by giving educators greater access to resources that help them perform their roles more effectively. Teachers can tailor their lessons to students' individual needs using real-time feedback on student performance provided by AI-driven assessment systems. AI also supports personalized learning by developing lesson plans specific to each student's requirements. Schools such as Kendriya Vidyalayas and others following the CBSE curriculum have already begun teaching students about AI. Some schools are utilizing humanoid robots to assist instructors in the classroom. Artificial intelligence (AI) is now an integral part of the newly intro-

duced robotics courses at several schools following the International Baccalaureate (IB) curriculum.

AI has the potential to enhance personalized learning by equipping educators with various tools and resources, enabling them to design tailored learning experiences for their students. AI can assist educators in recognizing the diverse learning styles, interests, and abilities of students, enabling the creation of lessons specifically designed to meet each student's unique requirements. AI allows educators to monitor student progress and modify their instructional approaches as needed.

"A personalized learning environment is capable of examining student performance data in real-time and systematically delivering tailored content, learning parameters, and feedback." This approach enables educators to gain deeper insights into student performance, thereby facilitating the development of effective learning plans for their students.

Ensuring that educators possess a solid grasp of the subjects they teach is a significant challenge in teacher preparation. AI has the potential to provide educators with individualized, high-quality learning materials and tools. For example, the Global Teaching Insights Report discovered that numerous instructors in underdeveloped nations face substantial obstacles in accessing top-notch instructional materials. However, this situation is rapidly evolving following the outbreak.

According to the ICUBE 2020 report by IAMAI and Kantar, internet usage is rising in India, which is a prerequisite for utilizing AI. Predictions indicate there will be over 900 million active internet users by 2025 (Kantar Icube 2020, Report CI.pdf, n.d.). AI can help bridge the knowledge gap by making a wealth of instructional materials, including videos, e-books, and online lectures, accessible to educators.

**The Human Aspect of Teaching**

Communicating with pupils on a personal level, earning their trust, and sparking their interest in a subject is no easy task. Being an educator demands bravery. A teacher's responsibilities include not only answering students' queries independently but also designing courses, creating syllabi, and delivering lectures or lessons.

Teachers must determine how much time to devote to each topic, which teaching methods will work best for their students, and which technological resources would be beneficial. They must also accommodate students with special needs. Given these numerous responsibilities, defining a teacher's precise role is complex. However, one thing is clear: at the core of this role is the fundamental need to teach.

With the rapid advancement of technology, education is evolving. Think about how the internet emerged. When it first came online more than half a century ago, no one could have predicted its long-term impact on daily life or society—economically, politically, and socially. Today, the internet is used in vastly different ways compared to just a decade ago.

As technology plays an increasingly important role in education, the most important feature of a teacher remains their basic humanity. Allow technology to do what it does best, and let human educators do what they do best: foster meaningful human interactions. Educational technology, like other tools, provides fresh ways to transmit knowledge to students while allowing teachers to impart wisdom and Bildung (holistic education).

**Conclusion**

The potential of AI in teacher education is substantial; however, its implementation necessitates a thorough examination of ethical, social, technical, and cultural fac-

tors. AI can enhance the quality of teacher education, refine teaching skills, and enable personalized learning. However, it also raises critical concerns about data privacy, bias, and cultural acceptability. To maximize AI's potential in teacher education, a well-defined framework must be established to ensure its appropriate application.

While AI is transforming multiple domains, including education, its role in teacher training presents an opportunity to enhance instructional quality. AI systems offer tailored and flexible learning experiences, improving the efficacy of teaching methods.

However, AI will not replace teachers. As Fan (2019, p. 133) notes, the future of AI depends on how people perceive and adopt it. The field of educational AI remains in its early stages, and teachers play a vital role in integrating AI into classrooms. While technological advancements have introduced new professions, the educator remains irreplaceable.

The real challenge is leveraging AI's capabilities while preserving the essential human skills that define great teachers. A teacher's presence in the classroom is crucial for students' growth, wellbeing, and social development. Humans, as social beings, thrive through group interactions.

Students need strong social skills to overcome isolation, grow as individuals, and find inner peace. Building solid relationships between teachers and students is essential. The fight against misinformation, populism, and ideological extremism begins with education.

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I want to thank Chief Education Officer Shopian, Mohd Shabir, for continuously encouraging me with his inspiring words.

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## Excessive earphone use today could lead to hearing aids tomorrow

DR AAMIR YOUSUF | YOUNUS RASHID

World Hearing Day is observed every year on March 3rd as an initiative by the World Health Organization (WHO) to raise awareness about hearing loss and promote hearing care. The theme for 2025 is “Changing Mindset: Empower Yourself to Make Ear and Hearing Care a Reality for All.”

According to WHO, over 1.5 billion people live with some degree of hearing impairment, and this number is expected to rise to 2.5 billion by 2050. While some types of hearing loss are treatable, others—especially those caused by human activities—are often irreversible. This makes it crucial to understand and prevent hearing loss, as it can significantly impact education, employment, and overall quality of life.

A major cause of hearing loss in the younger generation is the excessive use of earphones, leading to sensorineural hearing loss (SNHL). This condition occurs due to damage to the inner ear (cochlea) and, unlike conductive hearing loss, is permanent. Two primary factors contribute to this issue: excessive earphone use at high volumes and exposure to noise pollution.

Listening to audio above 85 decibels (dB) for prolonged periods can damage the delicate hair cells in the cochlea. Studies indicate that many teenagers use earphones for more than two hours daily, often at unsafe volume levels. Unfortunately, many are unaware of the long-term consequences until it is too late.

At GMC Anantnag, nearly 5 to 10 young patients—mostly school and college students—visit daily with hearing-related issues like tinnitus (ringing in the ears) and otalgia (ear pain), often linked to prolonged earphone use. A common observation in clinical practice is that if we use earphones for long today, we may need hearing aids later. To prevent hearing impairment, WHO recommends following the “60/60 Rule,” this means listening at no more than 60% volume for no longer than 60 minutes at a time.

Another major factor contributing to hearing loss

is noise pollution, especially in urban areas. Sources like traffic, construction, nightclubs, and factories expose people to harmful noise levels, leading to Noise-Induced Hearing Loss (NIHL). This type of hearing loss often goes unnoticed in its early stages, making detection difficult until significant damage has already occurred.

WHO data suggests that 1.1 billion young people worldwide are at risk of hearing loss due to unsafe listening practices and noise pollution. Governments must take strict measures to control noise pollution, and awareness campaigns must be intensified to protect public health.

Another critical area of hearing care is early detection of hearing loss in newborns. Undiagnosed hearing impairment can severely affect a child's speech, language development, and cognitive abilities. Neonatal hearing screening is a simple, non-invasive test conducted within the first few days of life to identify hearing impairments. Early detection allows for timely interventions such as hearing aids, cochlear implants, or speech therapy, significantly improving outcomes. Approximately 1 to 3 out of every 1,000 newborns have congenital hearing loss, but without screening, many cases remain undiagnosed until the child is 2-3 years old, delaying critical intervention.

While many countries have implemented Universal Newborn Hearing Screening (UNHS) programs, gaps remain—especially in low- and middle-income countries. Expanding access to screening must be a priority for global health organizations.

World Hearing Day 2025 serves as a crucial reminder of the growing burden of hearing loss, especially among the youth, and the importance of early detection through neonatal hearing screening. By addressing the root causes of hearing loss, promoting safe listening habits, and ensuring early intervention, we can protect future generations.

Let us join hands to raise awareness, advocate for change, and ensure hearing care is accessible to all. (Dr. Aamir Yousuf is the Head of the Department of ENT at GMC Anantnag, and Younus Rashid is a reporter)



DR MOHIUDIN ZORE KASHMIRI

“The enchanting aroma of Urdu—a fragrance that transcends borders and resonates in every accent—illustrates how language carries not just words, but a rich, pervasive essence that unites us all.”

In today's world, what we call our mother tongue is often interchanged with terms like the “first” or “primary language” and the “local” or “native language.” Scholars and educators across the globe have debated their definitions, sometimes drawing subtle distinctions and, at other times, treating them as synonymous. For instance, the Cambridge Dictionary emphasizes that our mother tongue is the language we learn in our earliest years—acquired naturally during childhood rather than in formal educational settings. Similarly, the Webster Dictionary first identifies the mother tongue as the local language, suggesting it is the foundation upon which we later build additional linguistic skills. Many experts also stress that this language is nurtured by our primary caregivers—be it our mother, grandmother, or even a devoted caregiver—arguing that a child's linguistic journey might even begin in the womb as they are subtly influenced by the ambient sounds of their environment.

Furthermore, the language we use in our day-to-day surroundings—whether at home or in our immediate community—often comes to be recognized as our native language. A survey of various sources, including Wikipedia, reveals that these terms are frequently used interchangeably, reducing the need for endless debates on their precise meanings.

At its core, the language that feels most natural to a child—the one spoken in the intimacy of home and the wider community—is the very medium through which thought flourishes. Although thought itself isn't confined to any specific language, having a mother tongue that resonates with our innermost being enables us to articulate ideas with clarity and depth. As our thoughts expand in this familiar language, they give rise to a more profound consciousness. This enriched consciousness can unlock the creative potential within us, paving the way for monumental literary and intellectual achievements.

History offers compelling evidence of this phenomenon. Liter-

ary legends such as Shakespeare, Tolstoy, Munshi Premchand, Tagore, and Iqbal, and intellectual pioneers like Marx, Einstein, Stephen Hawking, Noam Chomsky, and APJ Abdul Kalam, all found in their native tongues the expressive power needed to revolutionize literature and science alike. Their contributions illustrate that a language, far beyond being merely a tool for communication, is the seedbed of creativity and critical thought—a dynamic force that shapes and is shaped by human culture and civilization.”

We ultimately reach the understanding that the language a mother employs while nurturing her child, the language absorbed from our surroundings, and the language most prevalent in our society—all seamlessly fall under the expansive umbrella of our mother tongue. This observation reveals that the concept of a mother tongue is remarkably fluid. In environments where many languages coexist, it is natural for one language to rise above the rest, often because it possesses qualities that suit modern demands or resonates more deeply with its speakers.

Focusing on the region of Jammu and Kashmir, the significance of one's mother tongue is further amplified by the evolving cultural landscape. Over time, the definition of what constitutes a mother tongue has broadened. Historically, Jammu, Kashmir, and Ladakh were recognized as one collective entity, but on August 5, 2019, the central government redefined their political boundaries by establishing separate Union Territories. Despite these political changes, our interest remains firmly on the cultural and linguistic heritage of the area—especially the Urdu language, which continues to nourish and shape personal and communal identity.

Geographically and culturally, Jammu, Kashmir, and Ladakh represent three distinct regions where a multitude of languages and dialects flourish. Regionally, Kashmiri is predominant in Kashmir, Dogri in Jammu, and Ladakhi in Ladakh. Beyond these, a diverse linguistic tapestry is woven with Sanskrit and Arabic serving as religious languages, while Persian held sway as the official language for nearly six centuries. In contemporary times, English has emerged as the language of education, and additional languages such as Punjabi, Pahari, and Gojri remain integral to the daily lives of various tribes and communities. This rich mosaic of languages underscores not only the flexibility of the mother tongue concept but also its profound impact on cultural identity and expression.

This rich tapestry of languages naturally prompts the question: which language can serve as a

## HT-OPED

# Jammu and Kashmir's Heartbeat: Embracing Urdu as the Mother Tongue

common medium for nearly 13.5 million people in Indian Jammu and Kashmir, when no single one of the many dozen native languages alone perfectly meets that role? Recognizing this challenge, a long-standing decision was made to introduce Urdu—the most renowned language of the Indian subcontinent—to the region.

According to researcher Baldev Sharma, Urdu originated in the environs of Delhi around the 12th and 13th centuries. Its introduction to Jammu and Kashmir was a strategic choice. In 1886, Maharaja Pratap Singh of the Dogra Dynasty officially designated Urdu as the language of administration, solidifying its role in the region's public life.

A primary reason for adopting Urdu was the flourishing tourism industry. When Emperor Akbar annexed Kashmir in 1586, he established several tourist centres to highlight the region's natural beauty. Emperor Jahangir, captivated by the breathtaking landscapes, famously remarked:

“If there is a paradise on earth,

it is here, it is here, it is here.”

These words encapsulated the allure of Kashmir, drawing millions of visitors each year—especially to iconic sites like the sacred Amarnath Cave. As tourists from diverse backgrounds converged, local people naturally gravitated toward Urdu as a shared language, facilitating communication and cultural exchange.

Beyond tourism, the practical need for a unified language in administrative, business, and daily interactions was undeniable in a region marked by profound linguistic diversity. For the sake of collective benefit and to foster efficient communication among its inhabitants, embracing Urdu as the common language became an imperative.

Additional historical factors also played a role. During the Dogra period, many residents of Jammu and Kashmir travelled to Punjab (in undivided India) for various forms of work or business, further spreading Urdu's influence. Moreover, accounts exist of Kashmiri citizens being forcibly recruited as unpaid porters in frontier areas like Gilgit Baltistan to serve the Dogra Army. In these mixed interactions, a variant of Urdu evolved—today known as Hindko—further testifying to the language's pervasive reach.

In summary, the decision to elevate Urdu in Jammu and Kashmir was not only a response to the region's linguistic diversity but also a practical move to ensure that communication—be it in governance, commerce, or daily life—remains seamless among its diverse communities.

Following the events of October

1947, when Jammu and Kashmir was divided—with one part acceding to India and the remainder coming under Pakistani control—the Indian-administered region experienced a significant cultural evolution. Despite the political upheaval, Urdu not only survived but thrived, maintaining its official status and growing both literarily and linguistically.

In the decades that followed, practical needs and cultural shifts led to Urdu becoming an integral part of everyday life. Today, most parents in the region introduce Urdu to their children from an early age. As these children grow, whether interacting with neighbours or attending school, Urdu naturally becomes the language of daily communication. Over time, it is embraced wholeheartedly as the mother tongue, reflecting its deep-seated role in the community.

It is also noteworthy that Jammu and Kashmir has a proud tradition of Urdu literature spanning the last 250 years. This literary heritage stands alongside other eminent centres of Urdu literature—such as Delhi, Lucknow, the Deccan region, and Lahore—and is celebrated in its own right. The region's contributions to Urdu literature have been significant enough to warrant a distinct historical record, further underscoring the language's cultural impact.

Perhaps the most remarkable feature of Urdu is its inclusive nature. Unlike languages that are closely tied to specific regions or religions—such as Arabic with Muslims, Hebrew with Christians and Jews, Sanskrit with Hindus, Bengali with Bengal, or Punjabi with Punjab (which itself is written in both Gurmukhi and Shanmukhi scripts)—Urdu transcends these boundaries. Today, it is recognized as the world's fifth-largest language and is celebrated for its scholarly depth and cultural influence. In Jammu and Kashmir, people of all faiths—Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, Buddhists, Christians, and others—speak, write, and read Urdu with ease, using it to articulate their thoughts and emotions.

Ultimately, Urdu serves not only as a medium of communication but also as a unifying thread that weaves together the region's diverse cultural and religious identities. It encapsulates much of the local heritage, enabling communities to understand and express their unique identities with clarity and passion.

In light of these observations, it becomes clear that every resident of Jammu and Kashmir should acknowledge that, regardless of their familiarity with the Urdu script, our first, fundamental, local, and mother tongue is unquestionably Urdu. Unlike the other languages spoken in the region, which have a more limited role in fostering unified commu-

nication, Urdu serves as the sole common medium that unites us. It is a language that transcends mere communication to form the backbone of our collective identity.

Unfortunately, certain self-interested individuals have politicized the status of Urdu by promoting the idea that several other languages should share official status alongside it. This move, in effect, undermines the true meaning of an “official language.” At the same time, mainstream political parties—both at the local and national levels—continue to wield Urdu as a tool to delineate political views among the masses. This manipulation has been further compounded by deliberate tampering in educational institutions, where proficiency in Urdu is increasingly seen as optional for government jobs. Such trends have only strengthened the call for the establishment of a full-fledged Urdu Academy in Jammu and Kashmir, akin to similar institutions in other Indian states, to safeguard the language's legacy and promote its growth.

There is also a pressing need to implement a series of initiatives aimed at reinforcing the status of Urdu in every sphere of public life. These include:

- Expanding job opportunities for graduates and professionals proficient in Urdu,
- Promoting an Urdu signboard culture throughout all corners of Jammu and Kashmir,
- Computerizing official revenue records in Urdu to streamline administrative processes,
- Establishing an official Urdu language cell within the civil secretariat to support high-ranking government officers with dedicated Urdu readers and computer operators,
- Providing financial support to Urdu publications and journalism,
- Ensuring that all government notices, orders, and gazettes are issued in Urdu, and
- Recruiting and training Urdu teachers in both government and private educational institutions.

These are not just isolated demands but burning issues that need to be presented on a larger scale to the authorities. By addressing these challenges comprehensively, we can ensure that Urdu not only retains its esteemed place as our mother tongue but also continues to serve as the unifying force that binds the diverse communities of Jammu and Kashmir together.

**\* Dr Mohiudin Zore Kashmiri**  
**Associate Professor Urdu**  
**Department of Higher Education**  
**J&K Government.**  
**Residence: Farashgund Budgam**  
**Kashmir 191111 India.**  
**Email: drzoreurdu@gmail.com**  
**Cell: 9149773980.**

## Students need to inculcate writing skills

SYED MUSTAFA AHMAD

To combat language barriers and enhance creative writing skills, teachers must cultivate an environment of encouragement and exploration, and guide students to express themselves and write in their own words

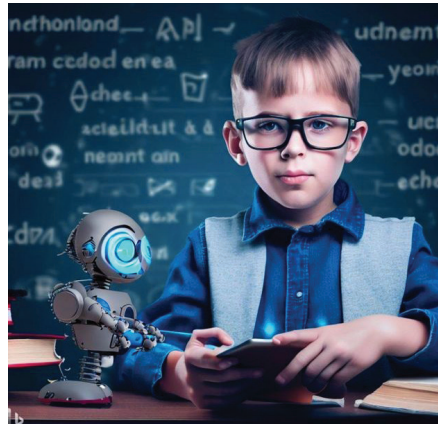
Once, I read a quote that says in order to be an expert in writing, one has to read, read and re-read. This fact proved to be truly fitting as the 2025 Board Examinations are going on. Some days ago, the English language papers of both the twelfth and tenth classes were held on a single day. Both papers were well-set. Apart from conceptual-based questions, the overall focus on writing skills has persuaded me to think about how creative writing is the hallmark of sustainable education. I asked my students how they had fared in the overall portions of the papers. They answered in one

voice that they do not have a strong hold over the English language. They disappointedly told me that language barriers haunt them day in and day out. I was nudged and decided to write a brief piece on this important skill.

As I have already written and mentioned in my previous articles, writing error-free English is of utmost importance in the age of AI. Nowadays, writing English efficiently and eloquently has become both easy and complicated. A student, just like an adult, is caught in the whirlpool of the information boom, unable to write in his or her own words. The main focus of my article is to let students study different kinds of material and summarize it in their own way. I mean to say that allowing students to get acquainted with different genres of writing can prove handy in writing effectively. However, the irony of fate is that students are unable

to complete their school syllabi during the allotted session. In this situation, it is impossible to expect them to think of out-of-the-box solutions. This is where a new approach is needed the most.

As said earlier, letting students read newspapers on a regular basis is a step toward the goal of writing sustainably. The hard copy of a newspaper is the best beginning that can be initiated in this regard. Allotting a day or two a week can build momentum. Newspapers like The Hindu, The Indian Express, The Hindustan Times, etc., suffice in the long run. Magazines like Tell Me Why, Frontline, The Caravan, India Today, Outlook, etc., are truly the stepping stones to writing in a crisp and smart manner. The organization of words and refraining from unnecessary words is a



quality of these newspapers and journals. Apart from this, they broaden mental horizons and let the fresh air of creative writing remove the foul air of deadwood.

Moreover, creating a suitable environment for expressing oneself has the potential to uplift students in the right direction of creative writing. In the company of mature writers, students may learn the art of expressing themselves. The

intricacies of writing can only be learned under the shadow of great writers. Ardent writers have the requisite acumen to transform a naïve student into a perfectly moulded writer. Their companionship is like a key that unlocks the closed doors of the minds of beginners. Their vast knowledge permits students to dive into the bottomless sea of writing experiences and come out with something tangible and beautiful. The fragrance of influential writers leaves a permanent mark on the lives of blooming students. Holding the shivering hands of students and guiding them carefully toward the goal of sensible writing is the characteristic feature of the natives of that environment, who radiate light in every direction to enlighten the path of others to carry on with this noble work.

In short, if we want students

to write in their own words, we have to carry a heavy load of rejection and frustration. This path is littered with innumerable thorns. From motivating students to feeling disappointed at their slow progress—or sometimes no progress at all—we must have nerves of steel. It is like keeping a flock of sheep together. The sheep always disperse here and there. However, the shepherd, having sympathy for them, always brings them back and protects them from any kind of harm. In the same vein, like shepherds, we must hold the hands of growing students to persuade them to write in their own words. They need careful nurturing, and they demand time from us.

Reading W.B. Yeats and Ted Hughes is not a cakewalk at all for a Class 10 student. Reading stories like The Enemy and going through the sweet verses of John Keats requires strong willpower and an optimistic

bent of mind. Paraphrasing Keats' verses is like climbing a steep slope without a rope and firm ground. However, slowly acquainting them with the masters of writing will have a visible effect on their overall psyche. We must put all our efforts into this noble work. There is no room for pessimism in this regard.

Let us pledge that we, at our individual levels, leave no stone unturned to persuade students to write in their own words. In other words, let us vow to be friends with students on this journey of innumerable barriers. Let us pat their backs and soothe their immature nerves. Hoping against hope, I believe that in the future, we will be able to see a visible difference in the lives of students in terms of writing effectively and eloquently.

**The writer is a teacher**  
**syedwrites100@gmail.com**

## PUBLIC NOTICE

I MOHAMMAD YOUNSI BHAT hereby public ally announces that my name has been changed to YOUNIS MOHAMMAD on my chldis school records who is studying in the Kashmir Valley School Humhama near airport road srinagar. This change is made to rectify an error & ensure accuracy.

### GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU & KASHMIR OFFICE OF THE TEHSILDAR KRRERI (Executive Magistrate 1st Class)

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

#### PUBLIC NOTICE

The Registrar Births and Deaths (Block Development Officer Wagoora)/ chokedar has submitted case file pertaining to Birth MOHAMMAD USMAN NAZIR S/O SHOWKAT AHMAD NAJAR R/O KACHWA MUQAM Tehsil WAGOORA Distt. Baramulla having verified the date of Birth as 09/03/2022. 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 entertaine

Executive Magistrate  
1st Class KRRERI

### GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU & KASHMIR OFFICE OF THE TEHSILDAR KRRERI (Executive Magistrate 1st Class)

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

#### PUBLIC NOTICE

The Registrar Births and Deaths (Block Development Officer WAGOORA )/ chokedar has submitted case file pertaining to Birth of MOHAMMAD 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 entertaine

Executive Magistrate  
1st Class KRRERI

## PUBLIC NOTICE

I ASMAT MEHRAJ hereby public ally announces that my name has been changed to ASMATH MEHRAJ on my chldis school records who is studying in the Kashmir Valley School Humhama near airport road srinagar. This change is made to rectify an error & ensure accuracy.

### اطلاع عام

ہر خاص عام کو اطلاع دی جاتی ہے کہ مجھے ہوم سٹے بنام home stay FROSTY HILLS کے دفتر میں کرنی مطلوب ہے اگر کسی کو ثورازم پہلگام کے دفتر میں پیس کرے بعد از معاد کو یہی عذر قبول نہیں ہوگا  
المستہر جسمینہ اختر زوجہ عامر گل ملک  
ساکن بنہ کوٹ پہلگام

### GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU & KASHMIR OFFICE OF THE TEHSILDAR KREERI (Executive Magistrate 1st Class)

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

#### PUBLIC NOTICE

The Registrar Births and Deaths (Block Development Officer Wagoora)/ chokedar has submitted case file pertaining to Birth of MOHAMMAD 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 entertaine

Executive Magistrate  
1st Class KREERI

### GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU & KASHMIR

#### OFFICE OF THE TEHSILDAR KRRERI (Executive Magistrate 1st Class)

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

#### PUBLIC NOTICE

The Registrar Births and Deaths (Block Development Officer Wagoora)/ chokedar has submitted case file pertaining to Birth TASADUQ MUNTIZER MIR S/O MUNTIZER NABI R/O SHIRPORA BANGIL Tehsil PATTAN Distt. Baramulla having verified the date of Birth as 09/12/2022 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 entertaine

Executive Magistrate  
1st Class KRRERI

### GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU & KASHMIR

#### OFFICE OF THE TEHSILDAR KRRERI (Executive Magistrate 1st Class)

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

#### PUBLIC NOTICE

The Registrar Births and Deaths (Block Development Officer Wagoora)/ chokedar has submitted case file pertaining to Birth TUFAIL NAZIR MIR & TAUFEEQ NAZIR MIR S/O NAZIR AHMAD MIR R/O SALOOSA Tehsil KREERI Distt. Baramulla having verified the date of Birth as 12/05/2018. & 12/05/2018 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 entertaine

Executive Magistrate  
1st Class KRRERI

### GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU & KASHMIR

#### OFFICE OF THE TEHSILDAR KRRERI (Executive Magistrate 1st Class)

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

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The Registrar Births and Deaths (Block Development Officer Wagoora)/ chokedar has submitted case file pertaining to Birth TASADUQ MUNTIZER MIR S/O MUNTIZER NABI R/O SHIRPORA BANGIL Tehsil PATTAN Distt. Baramulla having verified the date of Birth as 09/12/2022 and event has been shown to be occurred at SDH kreeri for issuance of delay order .In this connection .

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Executive Magistrate  
1st Class KRRERI

### GOVERNMENT OF UNION TERRITORY OF JAMMU

#### OFFICE OF THE TEHSILDAR SALLAR

#### LEGAL HEIR CERTIFICATE

It is certified that Sh. Smt. Kurnar SYED MUSTAFA SHAH, S/W/ SYED HYDER SHAHR HARKUD KATHAL SOFIPORA Tehsil SALLAR and District ANANINAG JAMMU/UND KASHMIR who had expired on 24/01/2025 is survived by following Legal Heirs.

S.No	Name	Age	Relationship with the Deceased	Marital Status
1	HAMEEDA BANDO	47	Wife	widow
2	SHEERA HYDER	25	daughter	UNMARRIED
3	SYED SAFI HYDER	15	son	UNMARRIED
4	SYED SIKTAIN HYDER	7	son	UNMARRIED

TEHSILDAR SALLAR

### UNION TERRITORY OF JAMMU & KASHMIR

## Office of the Executive Engineer PMGSY (JKRRDA) Division

#### SHORT TERM NOTICE INVITING E-TENDERS 1ST E-NIT No:- EE/PMGSY/GBL/17 of 2024

EE/PMGSY/GBL/17 of 2024-25

Dated 01/03/2025

Fresh Expression of Interest is invited for Fresh Expression of Interest is invited for Engagement of Consultant for Preparation of DPR's for Roads and Bridges including Road Survey, including Road Survey, Traffic Survey Counter, Detailed Soil Investigations, Study, Structural Design, Estimation, Preparation of Structural Design, Estimation, Preparation of Detailed Project Report & Getting it vetted from State Technical Agency (STA) for new roads proposed under PMGSY-IV in PMGSY Division in PMGSY Division Ganderbal of Kashmir Province (UT of J&K) The Bidding Documents comprising of qualifying information, eligibility criteria and terms of reference of EOI and other details can be downloaded from <https://www.pmgsytendersjk.gov.in/> www.pmgsytendersjk.gov.in/ as per schedule of dates given below. (NIT floated as per verbal directions by CE PMGSY Kashmir). DIPK-12533/24.

S.No.	Name of Work	Cost of documents (Rs.)	Earnest Money (Rs.)	Time Allowed for completion	Call of tender	Time and date of opening of tenders	Eligibility Criteria
1	2	4	5	6	7	8	9
1	Preparation of DPRs for Roads and Bridges including Road survey, Traffic survey with automatic traffic counter, soil investigation, Study, Structural Design, Estimation and vetting of DPRs from State Technical Agency (STA) for PMGSY IV Schemes PMGSY Division Ganderbal, as per BOQ Uploaded.	1000	75,000	15 Days	1 <sup>st</sup>	10-03-2025 at 11:00 AM	(Regd. Consultancy Firm)  Consultant having experience of preparation of Minimum 05 DPRs in the last 5 Years

#### 1. The important dates and time are as under: -

1.	Date of issue of tender notice	01-03-2025
2.	Period of downloading of bidding documents	01-03-2025 (06:00 PM) to 08-03-2025 (06:55 PM)
3.	Date time and place of pre bid meeting	04-03-2025 (11:00 AM) in the office of the Executive Engineer, PMGSY Division, Ganderbal
4.	Bid submission start date	01-03-2025 (06:00 PM)
5.	Bid submission end date	08-03-2025 (06.55 PM)
6.	Date & time of opening of Technical Bids (Online)	10-03-2025 (11:00 AM)
7.	Date & time of opening of Financial Bids (Online)	To be notified after Technical Bid evaluation is completed

2. Cost of Bid Form: Bids must be accompanied by e Bids must be accompanied by e-challan/Treasury challan/Treasury Challan/receipt mention above/ above/- (Non-refundable) deposited PWD (Revenue) mentioning therein the name of work/ e in M.H. 0059- mentioning therein the name of work/ e-NIT No. pledged to No. pledged to Executive Ganderbal (Tender Inviting Authority) as the cost Engineer PMGSY Division Ganderbal document. Any deviation in the cost of the tender the specified amount, the bid shall be rejected shall be rejected out rightly.

3. Earnest Money Deposit/ Bid Bid Security: At the time of Allotment L1 L1 must provide Hard Copy of Earnest Money/ Bid Security in the shape of Hard Copy of Earnest Money/ Bid Security in the shape of CDR/ FDR/ BG valid upto 30/05/2025 pledged to the tender receiving authority, i.e. Executive Engineer 30/05/2025 pledged to the tender receiving authority, Division Ganderbal, Any deviation Engineer PMGSY deviation in the specified amount the bid shall amount the bid shall be rejected out rightly. The Earnest money will be released to the successful bidder bidder only after formulation of DPR's and vetted vetted from State Technical Agency NIT Srinagar.

DIPK-12582/24  
Date: March 4, 2025

Sd/  
Executive Engineer  
PMGSY Division GANDERBAL

Sd/-  
Executive Engineer,  
R&B Division Sopore

## Govt. of Jammu and Kashmir Office of the Chief Medical Officer Bandipora

Email: [cmobandipora2@gmail.com](mailto:cmobandipora2@gmail.com), P.No: 01957225551, 225535

### NOTIFICATION

Subject: - Final Seniority List of Jr Physiotherapist employees of District cadre Health Department District Bandipora.

### Circular

Whereas, on the basis of information submitted by Drawing and Disbursing officers of this District , final seniority list of Jr Physiotherapist. categories “District Cadre” is framed and circulated among all concerned through their DDO's.

Whereas DDO's concerned have ensured that the service particulars furnished to this office in respect of each are true and correct as per their service records.

Whereas DDO's concerned have ensured none of the officials among the category have been left out.

Now, therefore final seniority list of Jr Physiotherapist employee category of “DISTRICT CADRE” Health Department District Bandipora is hereby circulated amongst the concerned through their respective drawing and Disbursing officers and issued its publication on two of the leading daily English/Urdu News papers for wide publicity& information all concerned,

DIPK-12620/24  
Dated: - 03 /03/2025

Sd/-  
Chief Medical officer  
Bandipora

### Union Territory Jammu & Kashmir

#### OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER & B DIVISIONS SOPORE.

#### NOTICE INVITING TENDER

Fresh NIT No- 113 of RnB-Sopore of 2024-25 e-tendering DATED 03.03.2025 (2nd call) For and on behalf of the Lt. Governor, J&K, e-tenders (in Single Cover System) are invited on Percentage rate basis from approved and eligible contractors registered with J&K State Govt. CPWD, Railways and other State/ Central Governments for the following works:

S.No.	Name of Work	Adv. Cost (Rs. In Lacs)	Cost of T/C (In Rupees)	DO E/ Money C	Time for completion of work	Time & Date of Opening of Bid	Class of Contractor	M.Hof Account
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	
01	Construction of Surface Drain from Shop of Irshad Ahmad (Chicken Shop) upto Masjid Shareef and Installation of Cement Concrete Pipes at House of Ab Rashid Malik and Repairment of Drain from House Gh Hassan Beigh upto House of Fayaz Ahmad at khawaja Gilgit Sopore Ward No:07 MC Sopore (Under Own Resources of MC Sopore)	1.69	200/-	3380/-	20 days	13.03.2025	DEE	Own Resources
02	Development of Lane from H/O Mushtaq Ahmad to H/O Gh Qadir Gojri via H/O Fida Hussain Kanjwal at Alnoor Colony Ward No 01 of MC Sopore (Under Own resources of MC Sopore).	1.126	200/-	2252/-	20 days	13.03.2025	DEE	Own Resources
03	Providing and laying RCC Spun pipes at Gulabad C Ward No:21. (under own resources of MC Sopore)	0.996	200/-	1992/-	15 days	13.03.2025	DEE	Own Resources
04	Raising /Repairment of Mainhole near Noor Abad Iqbal Nagar Sopore and opening of Main Hole cover thereof (under Own Resources MC Spore)	0.36	200/-	720/-	15 days	13.03.2025	DEE	Own Resources

Project Authority: MC Sopore  
Position of funds: Available

Position of AAA/ TS / Accorded

The Bidding documents consisting of qualifying information, eligibility criteria, specifications, Drawings, bill of quantities (B.O.Q.), Set of terms and conditions of contract and other detail's can be seen/ downloaded from the departmental website [www.jktenders.gov.in](http://www.jktenders.gov.in) as per schedule of dates given below

1	Date of issue of tender. Notice	03.03.2025	
2	Period of downloading of bidding documents	03.03.2025	12.03.2025 (upto 4.PM)
3	Bid Submission start date	03.03.2025	
4	Bid submission End date	12.03.2025 (4.00 PM)	
5	Date and time of opening of bides (online)	13.03.2025 (12 PM) in the office of Ex. Engineer R&B Division. Sopore	

2. Bids must be accompanied by a Treasury Challan/ CDR (dated between the bid start date and the Bid Submission End date) with NIT No. Name of work and S.No. deposited in M.H. 0059 in the name of Executive Engineer R&B Division Sopore (tender inviting authority) as the cost of the tender document.

3. At the time of tendering, all bidders must upload earnest money/ bid security equal to 2% of the Advertised Cost in the form of CDR/ FDR pledged to the tender receiving authority, i.e. Executive Engineer R&B Division Sopore. Besides that, the successful bidder will have to provide Performance Security @ 5% at the time of contract award, strictly in accordance with the Government's circular instructions from time to time. The earnest money/ bid security of 2% will be released to the successful bidder only after the submission of a Performance Security of 5% of the total cost, which will be released after successful completion of the DLP/ Maintenance Period

3(b) Geotech Photographs Minimum 03 sets (01 set Comprising of Photograph before, during and after execution of work) of size 26 cm x 21 cm to be provided.

All other terms, conditions shall remain same as per e-NIT No. 02 of 2024-25 issued under endorsement No: 1189-98 dated 08.06.2024 & NIT 106 of 2024-25.

21. If the contractor/ HMPQ quotes rate for any item of work in his tender as free of cost at the time of tendering process, his tender shall be rejected outrightly.

For and on behalf of the Lt. Governor of J&K, UT,

DIPK-12588/24  
Dated: 03.03.2025.

# DC B'pora reviews role of SBDU, BHDs under Misson Yuva

## Emphasises coordination & proper hand holding of youth identified under Mission Yuva

■ HT News Network

BANDIPORA, MARCH 04: The Deputy Commissioner (DC) Bandipora, Manzoor Ahmad Qadri on Tuesday chaired a meeting to review the role and responsibilities of Small Business Development Unit (SBDU) and Business Help Desks (BHDs) constituted under Misson Yuva at District and Sub Divisional levels.

It was given out that for implementing the mission, a Small Business Development Unit (SBDU) has been created at District Level, while Business Help Desks (BHDs) have been created at Sub Divisional Level and Yuva Doots at Panchayat Level.

The meeting was informed that the mission is focused on four (04) sectors including creation of nano entrepreneurs and collectives, creation of entrepreneurs in the focus and sunrise sector, business acceleration of existing enterprises, and creation of neo-innovative enterprises.

Highlighting the roles and responsibilities of SBDU and BHDs, the DC emphasized the on ground implementation of the interventions under the mission yuva in the district.

He stressed on engaging and encouraging potential entrepreneurs identified through yuva survey to establish their enterprises.

He asked the members of SBDU,



BHDs and Yuva Doots to ensure coordination and proper hand holding of entrepreneurs under Mission Yuva. Among others, the meeting was

attended by ADC Zaffar Husson Shawl; GMDC, CPO, ADEmployment, District Officers of various Departments, Representatives from NRLM,

Banks and other concerned. The Deputy Commissioner (DC) Bandipora, Manzoor Ahmad Qadri on Tuesday chaired a meeting to review the role and responsibilities of Small Business Development Unit (SBDU) and Business Help Desks (BHDs) constituted under Misson Yuva at District and Sub Divisional levels.

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He asked the members of SBDU, BHDs and Yuva Doots to ensure coordination and proper hand holding of entrepreneurs under Mission Yuva.

## Public outreach programme: DC Kulgam visits Behibagh, addresses public grievances

■ HT News Network

KULGAM, MARCH 04: Continuing the efforts to bring governance to the doorsteps of the people, Deputy Commissioner (DC) Kulgam, Athar Aamir Khan, today visited Behibagh, where he interacted with locals and listened to their grievances for early redressal.

The programme witnessed massive participation from residents of Hanjin, Behibagh, Dadarkoot, Nowpora, Mohamadpura, Shiganpora, and other adjoining villages.

Delegations from these areas put forth various demands before the chair. Several issues of immediate nature were redressed on the spot, while others were noted for further action as per feasibility and norms.



Addressing the gathering, DC reaffirmed the administration's commitment to the holistic development of all areas. He added that the primary objective of the outreach programme is to take governance at the doorsteps of the people.

The grievance redressal camp was attended by ACR, ADC, ACP, Executive Engineers, Tehsildar, BDO, and

other district officers.

Enroute, the DC also reviewed the progress on the Chawalgam Bridge and instructed the Engineers of executing agencies to scale up the pace of work to complete the bridge within days. Continuing the efforts to bring governance to the doorsteps of the people, Deputy Commissioner (DC) Kulgam, Athar Aamir Khan, today

visited Behibagh, where he interacted with locals and listened to their grievances for early redressal.

The programme witnessed massive participation from residents of Hanjin, Behibagh, Dadarkoot, Nowpora, Mohamadpura, Shiganpora, and other adjoining villages.

Delegations from these areas put forth various demands before the chair. Several issues of immediate nature were redressed on the spot, while others were noted for further action as per feasibility and norms.

Addressing the gathering, DC reaffirmed the administration's commitment to the holistic development of all areas. He added that the primary objective of the outreach programme is to take governance at the doorsteps of the people.

## Campaign to clear legacy waste kicked-off in Budgam

### Special cleanliness drive also initiated in block Budgam

■ HT News Network

BUDGAM, MARCH 04: The District Administration Budgam in collaboration with Rural Development department Budgam initiated a special campaign to clear the legacy waste across the district and also launched a special cleanliness drive from block Budgam. The drive was flagged off by Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC) Budgam, Mehraj-ud-din Shah from panchayat halqa Razwen.

Speaking to the gathering, ADC said that district administration Budgam is carrying out the drive with a missionary zeal to make the district neat and clean.

He discussed modalities for implementation of 'Swachhta Hi Seva' campaign in the district to mobilize communities to make the district clean, junk free, with 100% toilets to each and every household.

He said, compost and soakage pits,



segregation sheds, separate dustbins, no polythene zone is the aim of administration so that there is healthy society. He urged the public to make use of these facilities provided by the government so that there is clean and green Budgam.

Shah highlighted the aim of the campaign and said that it is meant to sensitise the public and bring

behavioural change in them with regard to the sanitation and cleanliness. He also said that such events will be organized at other places across the district also.

Others who were present during the programme were ACP Budgam, BDO, Panchayat Secretary concerned, locals of the area, besides other district, tehsil and block level officials.

## 'Viksit Bharat Youth Parliament-2025' to be held in March at SHMM-GDC (B) Anantnag

■ HT News Network

ANANTNAG, MARCH 04: With an aim to provide a vibrant platform for young minds to engage in thought-provoking discussions on crucial national issues, fostering leadership and policy awareness among the youth, 'Viksit Bharat Youth Parliament 2025' is going to be held at Shaheed Himayun Muzzamil Memorial- Government Degree College Anantnag.

The 'Viksit Bharat Youth Parliament 2025' is being organized in March 2025, under the joint initiative of Shaheed Himayun Muzzamil Memorial- Government Degree College Anantnag and the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, Government of India.

Young individuals aged 18 to 25 years as on 24-02-2025, residing within Anantnag, Kulgam, Pulwama, Shopian Districts and registered in GDC (B) Anantnag, GDC (W) Anantnag, GDC Kulgam, GDC Dooru, GDC Shopian, GDC Pulwama, GDC Bijbehara, GDC Utersoo, GDC Kokernag, GDC Mattan, GDC (W) Pulwama, GDC DH Por, GDC Vailoo Larnoo, GDC Kilam, GDC Frisal, GDC Zainapora, GDC Verinag, GDC Qazigund, GDC Tral, GDC Awantipora, GDC Pampore and GDC Rajpora are invited to participate in this prestigious program. Non-student young residents of these districts can also apply for the event.

## DLIC approves 317 cases under HADP in Bandipora

■ HT News Network

BANDIPORA, MARCH 04: The Deputy Commissioner (DC) Bandipora, Manzoor Ahmad Qadri on Tuesday chaired a meeting of District Level Implementation Committee (DLIC) to review the progress of the Holistic Agriculture Development Programme (HADP) in the district.

The committee approved a total of 317 cases of different departments under HADP including 104 cases of Sheep Husbandry Department, 90 from Agriculture Department, 78 from Horticulture and 45 from Animal Husbandry Department.

During the meeting, the DC emphasised evaluating progress, addressing challenges, and outlining a strategy for the accelerated implementation of the programme to benefit the eligible farmers.

He emphasized that effective collaboration among concerned departments is essential for proper planning, execution, and monitoring of HADP activities.

On the occasion, Qadri underlined the role of these initiatives in creating employment opportunities for youth. He urged all concerned departments to extend full support to individuals seeking employment in agriculture and related fields.

## DC Kulgam chairs Monthly NCORD meeting

■ Farooq Rather

KULGAM, MARCH 04: A meeting of the District Level Committee under the Narco Coordination Centre (NCORD) was convened today at Kulgam to discuss and strategize measures to curb drug abuse and narcotic trade in the district.

The Deputy Commissioner (DC) Kulgam, Athar Aamir Khan, chaired the meeting and reviewed the implementation of directives and decisions taken in previous sessions.

A detailed discussion was held on issues related to drug addiction, emerging areas of concern, hotspots of drug use, and the ongoing efforts by various departments to tackle the menace of drugs.

The meeting also assessed the enforcement agencies' actions against drug abuse and narcotic trafficking in the district. It was informed that dur-



ing the current month 08 drug peddlers were arrested and 07 FIRs were registered.

The Assistant Drug Controller conducted 101 inspections, leading to the suspension of 03 licenses. Additionally it was informed that the district has successfully achieved 100% target in the installation of CCTV cameras, and the DC directed officials to ensure the completion of 100% target in CBS as well. The DC instructed officers to ensure zero cultivation of illicit crops across the

district. He also instructed for intensifying awareness as per the formulated activity calendar.

He also urged all stakeholders for their active participation in eradicating the drug menace. Urging collective efforts, DC called upon all stakeholders to work religiously towards making Kulgam drug-free and 'Khushal Kulgam'.

The meeting was attended by ACR, SDM, ACP, CMO, A-S, Tehsildars, and other NCORD Committee members.

## Electrification of unelectrified areas of Gurez: DC Bandipora chairs meeting on Kanzalwan-Tulail Transmission Line

■ HT News Network

BANDIPORA, MARCH 04: In order to discuss the progress and plans for Kanzalwan-Tulail transmission line and other related issues for electrification and grid connectivity of unelectrified areas of Gurez, the Deputy Commissioner (DC) Bandipora, Manzoor Ahmad Qadri on Tuesday chaired a meeting of concerned officers.

The meeting was informed that for electrification of Tulail area of Gurez Sub Division and extending Grid connectivity to Tulail, Civil Work of Kanzalwan receiving station has been successfully completed. It was given out that the under construction receiving station at Sheikpora Tulail will ben-

efit around 22 villages and will cover around 2600 households in Tulail area. Speaking on the occasion, the DC stressed the importance of enhanced coordination among various stakeholders to ensure the smooth implementation of the project and resolve any arising issues on priority. He asked the concerned to ensure resolving any logistical or technical challenges swiftly to prevent any disruptions in the progress of the electrification work. The meeting was attended by SE KPDC, SE Projects North, CPO, Executive Engineers of PDD, Officers from Beacon and other concerned. The meeting was attended by SE KPDC, SE Projects North, CPO, Executive Engineers of PDD, Officers from Beacon and other concerned.

## District Administration Pulwama intensifies Market Checking Drives

### Sub-Standard items destroyed, fines imposed & market regulations enforced

■ HT News Network

PULWAMA, MARCH 04: To curb the practice of exorbitant profiteering and over pricing in wake of the holy month of Ramadan, the District Administration Pulwama has intensified market checking drives across the district.

The drive was conducted on the directions of the Deputy Commissioner Pulwama, Dr Basharat Qayoom, to ensure all essential commodities are sold at Government approved rates as per the quality standards with sufficient availability of consumables. The inspections aimed to verify price lists, assess hygiene standards, check the quality of goods and prevent black marketing.

The checking squads headed by Tehsildar concerned and Officers from MC, FCS&CA and Legal Metrology Depart-



ments conducted intensive market checking in various tehsils of the district and

inspected various markets within their jurisdiction.

During the inspection, the teams inspected business units including bakery, confectionery, grocery, vegetable, fruits, milk, meat and chicken selling shops. The teams also inspected several food processing units to check hygienic conditions while the date of manufacture, use-by date etc was also checked.

The perishable items found unfit for consumption were disposed-off on the spot and unauthorized polythene bags were seized. Furthermore, a total fine of Rs. 4000 was recovered from erring shopkeepers for violating different provisions of Food Safety and Standards Act.

The authorities urged all vendors to adhere strictly to the prescribed guidelines to ensure hygiene, cleanliness and public health safety and warned them of strict action against any malpractice.

## DLC approves diversion of Forest Land for six road projects in Rajouri

■ HT News Network

RAJOURI, MARCH 04 Deputy Commissioner Rajouri, Abhishek Sharma today chaired a meeting of District Level Committee (DLC) regarding the diversion of forest land under Section 3(2) of the Forest Rights Act for the construction of road and bridge projects.

The committee deliberated on the diversion of forest land for the construction of six road projects across different blocks under the Rural Development Department (RDD) and the Public Works Department (PWD R&B).

The approved projects included Soom to Kothian Road (Block Kalakote), Bar-eti to Ambligurah Road



(Block Kalakote), Main Road to Kalyoon Abdul Mohalla Road (Block Mougla), Nilla Danda to Langar Road (Block Mougla), Argi Bridge to Patti Galla via Sagote

Road (Block Mougla) and Tuni Ke Bani to Jandi Matar Road (Block Rajouri)

After detailed discussions, all six cases were approved by the DLC, mark-

ing a significant step towards improving rural connectivity in the district.

The Deputy Commissioner emphasized the importance of these road projects in facilitating better transportation and boosting economic activities in remote areas.

The meeting was attended by ADC Kalakote, Mohd Tanveer; DFO Rajouri; DFO Nowshera, Shewata Deona; CPO, Maqsood Ahmed; ACD, Vijay Kumar; DSWO, Abdul Raheem; EXEN PWD (R&B) Kalakote, Aftab Khan; EXEN R&W, Zahir Khan, and other concerned members of the DLC. Additionally, DDC Member Rajouri, Sai Abdul Rashid; DDC Member Thanamandi, Abdul Qayoom Mir and DDC Member Kalakote, Anita Thakur, were also present.

## DC Poonch inaugurates Virtual Kiosk/Mini Digital Studios in Aspirational Block Mankote

■ HT News Network

POONCH, MARCH 04: In a landmark initiative aimed at integrating technology into education, Deputy Commissioner Vikas Kundaal inaugurated two Virtual Kiosk/Mini Digital Studios at Middle School Dharati and Middle School Nar Balnoi in the Aspirational Block of Mankote through virtual mode from the DC Office Poonch.

During the inauguration, the Deputy Commissioner interacted with school children through virtual mode, emphasizing the significance of the Virtual Kiosk/Mini Digital Studios in transforming the teaching-learning process. This initiative is designed to address the shortage of



teaching staff and leverage digital technology to enhance educational delivery.

The Virtual Kiosks are equipped to operate in both offline and online modes, effectively mitigating internet connectivity challenges in remote areas. This technological intervention promises to provide uninterrupted learning opportunities for students, bridging the educational gap in

the region.

The initiative has been made possible through collaboration with Jnana Prabodhini, Pune, Maharashtra, which generously donated the two kiosks. Two engineers from Jnana Prabodhini, who volunteered for this project, were present during the inauguration.

The Deputy Commissioner expressed gratitude to Jnana Prabodhini for

their invaluable contribution to digital education and underscored the importance of such initiatives in revolutionizing the education sector. During the inauguration, the Deputy Commissioner interacted with school children through virtual mode, emphasizing the significance of the Virtual Kiosk/Mini Digital Studios in transforming the teaching-learning process. This initiative is designed to address the shortage of teaching staff and leverage digital technology to enhance educational delivery.

The Virtual Kiosks are equipped to operate in both offline and online modes, effectively mitigating internet connectivity challenges in remote areas.

## MSME DFO Jammu organizes awareness program on LEAN

■ HT News Network

JAMMU, MARCH 04: An awareness program on LEAN competitive scheme of Union Ministry of MSME was conducted by MSME-Development & Facilitation Office in collaboration with Association of Small Scale Industries Gangyal for encouraging the MSMEs of the region manufacturing products of world class qualities with minimum wastages in manufacturing process like improvement in storage of raw material, arrangement of tools, placing of machineries according to scientific layout, material handling, optimizing the workforce, storage of Finished goods, conducting Motion study etc.

MSME-Development &



Facilitation Office is a field office of Union Ministry of MSME implements various schemes and activities for the benefit of MSME Sector in Jammu & Kashmir.

The activities including Entrepreneurship Awareness Program, Intellectual Property Rights Awareness Program, PM-Vishwakarma Seminar, PM-Vishwakarma Awareness Workshop, Entrepreneurship & Skill Development Program, Management Development Program, Reimbursement of Barcode Expenditure, Reimbursement of Stall Charges, To

and From Charges, Advertising Expenditure for participating in 250 exhibition or trade fairs approved by Union Ministry of MSME.

Union Ministry of MSME provides subsidy from 12 lakh to 32 lakh for any LEAN Cluster. The lists of approved exhibitions are available in [https://my.msme.gov.in/MyMsme/Reg/COM\\_ViewEvent.aspx](https://my.msme.gov.in/MyMsme/Reg/COM_ViewEvent.aspx).

Address on LEAN was given by Vinod Pandita from Quality Council of India for achieving the said objectives whereas a lecture on Schemes imple-

## DC Kishtwar reviews disaster management preparedness in District

■ HT News Network

KISHTWAR, MARCH 04: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Kishtwar, Rajesh Kumar Shavan today reviewed the disaster management preparedness in the district.

The meeting focused on assessing the latest status of damages to essential infrastructure, including water and power supply, road connectivity and other local facilities, in the wake of the recent snowfall and immediate mitigation measures thereof.

During the meeting, the DC took stock of the water supply situation across Kishtwar town and its adjoining areas, as well as in various remote parts of the district. He directed the Jal Shakti Department to ensure the swift restoration of water supply in all affected areas. Emphasizing the need for prompt



action, he instructed officials to deploy necessary resources and manpower to address any disruptions in the township and its adjoining areas.

Similarly, the power supply in several areas, particularly in Dachhan and Paddar, has been interrupted due to the snowfall and associated damages. The Deputy Commissioner issued directions to the Power Development Department (PDD) to take im-

mediate steps for restoring electricity in these regions. The concerned departments were asked to mobilize field functionaries and logistical support to ensure the earliest possible restoration of essential services.

To reinforce the restoration efforts, the Public Health Engineering Department (PHED) and PDD were specifically instructed to exercise all necessary reinforcement measures and expedite repair

work. The departments were urged to maintain close coordination and ensure that no area remains without essential services for an extended period.

A major concern raised during the meeting was the disruption of road connectivity along the Kishtwar-Paddar highway point ahead of the Patheraki Bridge due to a landslide. The blockage has severely impacted the supply chain for the subdivision. Taking serious note of this, the DC directed the General Reserve Engineer Force (GREF) and the local administration to work in tandem for the immediate restoration of road connectivity. He further instructed the concerned authorities to work round the clock, deploying adequate manpower and machinery, to ensure the reopening of the road by tomorrow.

## Little Einstein School Udhampur celebrates National Science Day

■ HT News Network

UDHAMPUR, MARCH 04: Little Einstein School, Udhampur celebrated National Science Day with great enthusiasm by organizing a Science Exhibition on its premises.

Deputy Commissioner Udhampur, Saloni Rai was the chief guest who formally inaugurated the event while District Information Officer, Rajinder Dagra was the guest of honour on the occasion.

The event witnessed the participation of Ankush Gupta, Managing Director Little Einstein School and Pooja Mahajan, Principal of the school, along with faculty members, students and parents.

The celebration commenced with a warm welcome to the distinguished guests, followed by the traditional lighting of the ceremonial lamp and an auspicious Ganesh Vandana performance by the students.

While addressing the gathering, the Deputy



Commissioner lauded the efforts of the school management for organizing such an innovative

event. She highlighted the importance of fostering scientific temperament and rational thinking among students, emphasizing that innovation and research play a vital role in shaping a progressive society. She also commended the students for their creativity and analytical skills, encouraging them to pursue science with curiosity and passion.

The DC along with the DIO, visited the exhibition stalls, interacting with students and appreciating their innovative projects. The students showcased a wide range of static and working models, effectively demonstrating scientific concepts for learning and teaching purposes. On the occasion, the students also presented theme-based cultural performances, adding vibrancy to the celebration.

Managing Director Ankush Gupta thanked all the guests and participants for their contributions to the event. Principal of the school extended her appreciation to the students and faculty for their dedication in making the event a grand success.

## DDC Poonch reviews progress of health infrastructure projects

■ HT News Network

POONCH, MARCH 04: District Development Commissioner Poonch, Vikas Kundaal, today convened a meeting to evaluate the ongoing healthcare projects within the framework of the District and Union Territory Capital Expenditure (Capex) budget for the fiscal year 2024-25.

Key discussions focused on the progress of new hospital buildings, equipment upgrades, and various health initiatives supported by the Capex program. The DDC emphasized the importance of quality in all ongoing projects, instructing concerned officers to ensure standards are met.

In a bid to accelerate progress, the DDC urged all executing agencies to intensify efforts over the next two weeks, enhance

workforce deployment, and fulfill pending targets within the specified timeframe. He highlighted that timely completion of these healthcare infrastructure projects is essential for improving healthcare delivery in the district, as well as the prudent utilization of allocated funds.

The meeting was attended by key stakeholders, including the CPO Poonch, CMO, Medical Superintendent of District Hospital Poonch, Executive Engineer PWD (R&B) Poonch/Surankote/Mendhar and Block Medical Officers. Key discussions focused on the progress of new hospital buildings, equipment upgrades, and various health initiatives supported by the Capex program. The DDC emphasized the importance of quality in all ongoing projects, instructing concerned officers to ensure standards are met.

## GoC 16 Corps Nagrota takes up issues of Ex-Servicemen with Chief Secretary

■ HT News Network

JAMMU, MARCH 4: Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo, today listened to the issues and concerns of Ex-Servicemen highlighted by Lieutenant General, Navin Sachdeva, AVSM, SM, GOC 16 Corps based in Nagrota, in his office at Civil Secretariat, Jammu.

Principal Secretary, Home Department, Chandraker Bharti; Brigadier Kapil Taneja, VSM, Brig A 16 Corps; Brigadier Gurmeet Singh Shan, Director Rajya Sainik Board and Colonel Tejas B Candade, SM, Colonel GS HR 16 Corps were also present on the occasion.

Some of the core demands raised with the Chief Secretary included compilation and complete digitization of the data-

base of all the Ex-Servicemen of J&K for proper management of the cadre besides preservation and easy maintenance of records for the posterity.

They also asked for allowing them to apply for government jobs under 'Ex-Servicemen' quota in the last year of their services as the recruitment process takes some months in its completion thereby giving them opportunity to join at the end of their service period. One more demand was utilization of their services as NCC Trainers as these Ex-Servicemen are more suitable to play the role and give better training to the cadets enrolled here.

Some other demands included more welfare measures in terms of livelihood opportunities in favour of Veer Naris besides filling up of the posts



of Zilla Sainik Welfare Officers in each district so that these servicemen do not have to travel to cities for disposal of their service related affairs.

The Chief Secretary, while

responding to the issues and demands raised by them, outlined his commitment towards this section of the society who had spent their lives for preserving the honour and sovereignty

of the nation. He assured them that the government will explore the options for giving them due opportunities of self employment under different government schemes and also

resolve their issues faced in availing different government job opportunities.

In order to bring added efficiency in grievance resolution, the Chief Secretary advised them to utilize the 'JK Samadhan' portal for registration of their grievances. He maintained that this platform gives seamless access to the administration and ensures timely resolution of grievances with quality outcomes up to the optimum satisfaction of the aggrieved persons.

Dulloo also advised the Home Department to give sympathetic consideration to all these demands and take steps for early resolution of all of these. He maintained that the nation is indebted to these people for their yeoman's services given during their service period.

He directed for taking a timely review of resolution of these issues besides assuring them that the administration is alive to the welfare concerns of these people. He made out that the government would take every possible step to ensure a pleasant post-retirement life in favour of all the ex-Servicemen of the UT of J&K. They also asked for allowing them to apply for government jobs under 'Ex-Servicemen' quota in the last year of their services as the recruitment process takes some months in its completion thereby giving them opportunity to join at the end of their service period. One more demand was utilization of their services as NCC Trainers as these Ex-Servicemen are more suitable to play the role and give better training to the cadets.

# EU ponders 800 billion euro plan to beef up defences to counter possible US disengagement

■ HT News Network

BRUSSELS, Mar 4: The chief of the European Union's executive on Tuesday proposed an 800 billion euro (USD 841 billion) plan to beef up defences of EU nations to lessen the impact of potential US disengagement and provide Ukraine with military muscle to negotiate with Russia following the freeze of US aid to the embattled nation.

European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen said the massive "REARM Europe" package will be put to the 27 EU leaders who will meet in Brussels on Thursday in an emergency meeting following a week of increasing political uncertainty from Washington, where President Donald Trump questioned both his alliance to the continent and the defence of Ukraine.

"I do not need to describe the grave nature of the threats that we face," von der Leyen said.

Key to the quandary of EU nations has



been an unwillingness to spend much on defense over the past decades as they hid under the US nuclear umbrella and a sluggish economy, which creates challenges for a quick ramp-up of such spending.

Von der Leyen said the first task is to

loosen the fiscal constraints the EU puts on budgetary spending to "allow member states to significantly increase their defense expenditures without triggering" punishing rules aimed at keeping deficits from going too far into the red.

"So if member states would increase their defence spending by 1.5 per cent of GDP on average, this could create fiscal space of close to 650 billion euros (USD 683 billion) over a period of four years," von der Leyen said.

This would be topped up by a loans programme of 150 billion euros (USD 157 billion) to allow member states to invest in defence. She said military equipment that needs to be improved includes air and missile defence, artillery systems, missiles and ammunition, drones and anti-drone systems and cyber preparedness. Such a plan will force many EU member states to greatly increase their military spending, which is still below 2 per cent of gross domestic product. NATO Secretary-General Mark Rutte has told the member states they need to move to more than 3 per cent as quickly as possible.

The plan will now be the blueprint for Thursday's summit, although immediate decisions beyond strong commitments were unlikely. (AP)

## Nepal's FM meets parents of girl student who died by suicide in India, says their daughter will get justice

■ HT News Network

KATHMANDU, Mar 3 : Nepalese Foreign Minister Arzu Rana Deuba Monday met the parents of Prakriti Lamsal and assured them that the government is making every possible effort to ensure justice.

Prakriti, a third-year B Tech (Computer Science) student at Kalinga Institute of Industrial Technology (KIIT) in Odisha, was found dead in her hostel room last month, leading to unrest on the campus.

She allegedly died by suicide under circumstances that her family and authorities are currently scrutinising. Around 1,000 Nepalese students are studying at KIIT, Odisha. Foreign Minister Deuba and Home Minister Ramesh Lekhak visited the home of the parents of Prakriti in Bhairahawa to extend condolences, according to the Foreign Minister's secretariat.

Rana assured Prakriti's family that the Nepali government is making every possible effort to ensure justice.

She said that her ministry took the diplomatic initiative to find out the facts relating to the death of Prakriti and to punish the culprits. Prakriti will get justice, the minister added. She also recalled her telephone conversation with Odisha Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi. She urged him to punish the culprit by finding the facts and resumption of studies of the Nepalese students studying at KIIT.

## No alternative to maintaining good ties with India: Bangladesh CA Mohd Yunus

■ HT News Network

DHAKA, March 3 : Bangladesh Interim Government Chief Advisor Muhammad Yunus has said there is no alternative to maintaining good ties with India, even as he said that there have been "some clouds" in the relationship due to "propaganda".

"Some conflicts had been seen in the midway. I would say some clouds were seen. These clouds mostly came through propaganda. Others will judge the sources of those as propaganda," Yunus told BBC Bangla in an interview published on Monday.

The comments come as the interim government is set to complete seven months, since it was formed following the ouster of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on August 5 last year by a so-called "student-led" protest.

Yunus' remarks also come as UNB quoted diplomatic sources to say that there might be a possible first ever in-person meeting between Chief Adviser Yunus and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi on the sidelines



of the BIMSTEC Summit in Bangkok on April 4, 2025.

Responding to a specific question, Yunus said the relations between the two neighbours are in very good shape and there has been "no deterioration".

He said, there had been some misunderstandings. "We are trying to overcome those misunderstandings. There is no problem in our basic relationship," Yunus added.

The Chief Adviser said he had always explained that the relations between Bangladesh and India are so deep, still the relationship is in

good shape and it will remain good in the future. "There is no alternative to maintain good relations between the two countries," said Yunus said.

He said the relationship between Bangladesh and India is "historically, politically and economically" very close and they "cannot deviate" from this.

He also referred to huge "interdependencies" on each other.

Yunus said there is continuous communication between the two countries.

After the Interim Government was formed Prime Minister Modi sent a message to Chief Adviser Yunus, later they had a telephone conversation, and Modi invited Prof Yunus to join the third Voice of Global South Summit hosted virtually by New Delhi on August 17 last year.

On January 1 this year, Foreign Affairs Adviser Md Touhid Hossain made it clear that maintaining good relationships with three big countries - India, China and the United States - is among the priorities in 2025. He stressed that Dhaka's ties with Delhi will advance beyond a single issue.

## Urge both sides to leverage trade ties for shared growth: USIBC as US-India trade talks begin

■ HT News Network

NEW YORK/WASHINGTON, Mar 4: A top American business advocacy group has said that meaningful trade facilitation between India and the US through a sweeping bilateral trade deal is long overdue and both sides should work to formalise a level playing field and full and open market access.

These remarks were made on Monday by the US Chamber of Commerce US-India Business Council (USIBC) President Ambassador (ret.) Atul Keshap as trade talks between Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal and his US counterpart Howard Lutnick commenced in the US.

"We wish both governments success in their negotiations, and urge both sides to leverage the trade relationship for shared growth. Meaningful trade facilitation through a sweeping bilateral trade deal is long overdue, and would be instrumental in boosting the GDPs of both America and India and bind our two mighty economies closer together," Keshap said. As the US-India trade talks commenced between Lutnick and Goyal, the US Chamber urged ambition from both sides.

"For years, US and Indian businesses have invested in each other's countries without a formal investment or trade framework. India represents only 2.5 per cent of America's trade volumes, and that number can and should increase substantially," Keshap said.

He added that now, both sides should work with focus to "formalise a level playing field, full and open market access, swift dispute arbitration, and predictable tax and regulatory policies to boost investment, growth, and job creation in both countries."

He said non-tariff barriers and red tape that slow market access should be dismantled with haste. "The opportunity for both sides is a landmark



bilateral agreement that can further unleash entrepreneurship and GDP growth in both countries. Now is the time for ambitious outcomes between Washington and Delhi," Keshap said.

He noted that USIBC member companies - American and Indian - enthusiastically applauded the efforts of both governments and "wish them productive talks that deepen the strategic, economic, and technological partnership between the people of the United States and the people of India."

The bilateral talks between Goyal and Lutnick over the trade deal come weeks after the official working visit by Prime Minister Narendra Modi to the White House on February 13 for discussions with US President Donald Trump.

Following the meeting, the two leaders had set a bold new goal for bilateral trade - "Mission 500" - aiming to more than double total bilateral trade to USD 500 billion by 2030.

The joint statement issued after the Modi-Trump meeting said that the two leaders resolved to expand trade and investment to make their citizens more prosperous, nations stronger, economies more innovative, and supply chains more resilient. Recognising that this level of ambition would require new, fair-trade terms, the leaders had announced plans to negotiate the first tranche of a mutually beneficial, multi-sector Bilateral Trade Agreement (BTA) by fall of 2025.

## Singapore confirms 187 cases in food poisoning probe linked to national exercise

■ HT News Network



SINGAPORE, Mar 4: Singaporean authorities have confirmed 187 cases of gastroenteritis following the distribution of ready-to-eat meals as part of a Total Defense exercise in February.

Among the cases, 184 were from schools, Minister for Sustainability and the Environment Grace Fu said Tuesday in response to parliamentary questions, adding that all affected individuals have recovered.

During the parliamentary session, lawmakers raised questions about the cause of the symptoms, the microbiological and shelf-life studies of the product testing, the processes in place to vet suppliers of ready-to-eat meals for government programs, and whether any penalties would be imposed on SATS, the food solutions provider.

Fu said that tests conducted by the Singapore Food Agency on collected meal samples did not detect any food-borne pathogens. She added that both the agency and the Ministry of Health are conducting a comprehensive investigation, and necessary enforcement actions will be taken if any lapses are detected.

The food-poisoning incident first came to light at the School of the Arts, where 20 students developed symptoms of gastroenteritis after consuming the ready-to-eat meals. These meals were distributed between Feb. 15 and Feb. 28 as part of Singapore's 2025 Exercise SG Ready, a national preparedness exercise.

In addition to schools, aging facilities also received the meals.

A total of 150,000 meals were planned for distribution in the exercise, which "focuses on strengthening Singaporeans' preparedness for power disruptions caused by cyberattacks." (UNI)

## Refugees injured in clashes with Kenyan police during food ration protests

■ HT News Network

NAIROBI, Mar 4: At least four people sustained gunshot wounds as police clashed with protesters in Kenya's Kakuma refugee camp, in the country's north.

Thousands of refugees in the camp, which hosts people fleeing from conflict and drought in neighbouring South Sudan, Ethiopia, Burundi and Congo, protested Monday against food rationing due to funding constraints.

The World Food Program, which is in charge of food distribution at the refugee camp, said in last December the food rations to refugee camps were "at 45 percent of the minimum food basket due to resource constraints."

The WFP has warned for years that it is facing shortfalls in the contributions from governments it relies on for funding, and on Monday it announced that it is closing its office in South Africa due to US President Donald Trump's cuts in foreign aid.

A refugee from neighbouring South Sudan, John Garang, held up a roughly 4 litre (1 gallon) pot.

"This is the container they are now using to measure beans and oil and the other one for rice. And this is equivalent for one month for your food. Assume you don't have another income, it's only this. Is this enough for you," he asked.

Kenya is currently in the process of transitioning refugees into integrated settlements as opposed to the previous system of refugee camps, which are donor reliant, and has already gazetted Kakuma and Dadaab as municipalities. (AP)

## Pak doctors examine Imran Khan in Adiala jail

■ HT News Network

ISLAMABAD, Mar 4: A team of Pakistani doctors visited the Adiala Jail to conduct a medical check-up of former prime minister Imran Khan after reports about his health emerged, according to a media report.

Khan had been incarcerated since August, 2023 and his Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf party had expressed concerns about his health.

Dawn reported that a team from the Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences (Pims) visited the Adiala Jail on Monday to conduct a medical check-up of the former prime minister.

The four-member team was headed by Dr Altaf Hussain, an ENT specialist, while other members of the team included Dr Umar Farooq from the hospital's Dental Department, Dr Muhammad Ali Arif from General Medicine and Dr Tashfeen Imtiaz from General Surgery. The checkup lasted 30 minutes.

The examination follows a spate of allegations recently levelled by the PTI, most notably its information secretary Sheikh Waqas Akram, claiming that the government had placed Imran Khan in solitary confinement.

Another PTI leader had claimed that Khan was not even being allowed to meet his sisters or other relatives. Khan's family physician was not being allowed to visit him, fuelling concerns about his health, a PTI leader said.

The doctors' report about his physical condition was not immediately released.

Dawn also reported that speculations were rife in Islamabad that the former prime minister might be transferred to some other location. However, there was no official word about any such claims.

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur had said last month that Khan would "soon be shifted elsewhere".

However, there was no official word about the plan to shift him. (PTI)

## Indonesia, Australia extend bilateral local currency swap agreement for 5 yrs

■ HT News Network

JAKARTA, Mar 4: Bank Indonesia (BI) announced on Tuesday that Indonesian and Australian financial institutions have extended their bilateral currency swap arrangement (BCSA).

Governor Perry Warjiyo of BI and Governor Michele Bullock of the Reserve Bank of Australia (RBA) signed the renewed arrangement, which will span five years, beginning on March 4, 2025.

"The BCSA enables the exchange of local currencies between the two central banks with a value of up to 10 billion Australian dollars (6.2 billion U.S. dollars) and the corresponding Indonesian rupiah," BI said in a press release.

The deal extends a cooperation that began in December 2015.

The renewal reaffirms BI and RBA's commitment to enhancing bilateral trade and investment for the benefit of both nations' economies.

In addition to Australia, BI engages in local currency cooperation with other central banks in the region, including those of China, South Korea, and Malaysia. (UNI)





# PM Modi congratulates new Austrian Chancellor Christian Stocker

## AGENCIES

NEW DELHI, MARCH 4 (UNI)

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday congratulated the new Austrian Chancellor, Christian Stocker, and said he looks forward to working with him to take the bilateral partnership to unprecedented heights.

In a post on X, the PM said:

“Warmly congratulate H.E. Christian Stocker on being sworn in as the Federal Chancellor of Austria.

“The India-Austria Enhanced Partnership is poised to make steady progress in the years to come.



“I look forward to working with you to take our mutually beneficial cooperation to unprecedented heights.”

Christian Stocker was sworn in as Austria's new chancellor on Monday, heading a three-party coalition government formed

five months after last year's election.

Stocker's centre-right People's Party (ÖVP), the centre-left Social Democrats (SPÖ) and the liberal Neos clinched a deal last week after their first attempt to form a coalition failed in January.

# India's security apparatus must remain adaptive to emerging threats: Rajnath

## AGENCIES

NEW DELHI, MAR 4 (UNI)

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Tuesday said that India's security apparatus must remain adaptive to emerging threats such as cyber warfare, hybrid warfare, space-based challenges, and transnational organised crime.

Addressing the gathering, after inaugurating the Ministry of Home Affairs - Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) Collaboration Conference-Cum-Exhibition on 'Advanced Technologies for Internal Security and Disaster Relief Operations' at DRDO Bhawan here, Singh highlighted the growing complexities in global security and the increasing overlap between internal and external threats, an official statement said.

“Security challenges in the modern world are evolving rapidly, and the overlap between internal and external security is increasing. It is imperative that our institutions break silos and work collaboratively to ensure a strong, secure, and self-reliant India,” he stated.

Rajnath stressed that India's national security must be viewed holistically, integrating efforts across different security agencies and leveraging the latest technological advancements.

The Defence Minister noted that India's internal security is not just about managing conventional threats like terrorism,



separatist movements, and left-wing extremism but also about preparing for unconventional threats that can destabilise the nation's economic and strategic interests.

“The adversaries of today do not always come with traditional weapons; cyber-attacks, misinformation campaigns, and space-based espionage are emerging as new-age threats that require advanced solutions,” he stated.

“DRDO has played a pivotal role in enhancing India's defence capabilities, and its contributions to internal security are equally commendable. From small arms and bulletproof jackets to surveillance and communication systems, DRDO's innovations are empowering our security forces,” Singh underlined. Rajnath urged DRDO and MHA to work together to create a common list of scalable products that can be jointly developed and deployed in a time-bound manner.

“Our security forces require the best tools and

technologies to remain ahead of the curve. It is encouraging to see DRDO's focus on modernisation, with products like small arms, surveillance equipment and drone systems either inducted or undergoing evaluation for deployment in internal security agencies,” he highlighted.

Recalling his tenure as Home Minister, Singh highlighted how the collaboration between security agencies and scientific institutions led to significant technological advancements.

The Defence Minister cited examples of DRDO-developed technologies such as the corner shot weapon system, INSAS rifles, IED jammer vehicles, and riot control vehicles, which were effectively integrated into the operations of CAPFs.

Singh also spoke about the importance of leveraging technology not just for security but also for disaster management and humanitarian relief.

“The role of technology is not just in defence but

also in ensuring peace and social welfare. Advanced systems like bulletproof jackets, drones, surveillance equipment and anti-drone technologies must be leveraged not only for security operations but also for disaster management and humanitarian relief,” he said.

Rajnath cited the increasing frequency of natural calamities like cyclones, avalanches, earthquakes and cloud bursts and underscored the critical need for advanced rescue tools. The use of technologies such as thermal imaging cameras, drone-based detection systems, and victim locating devices can significantly reduce casualties and damage. Referring to the recent avalanche in Mana, Uttarakhand, he lauded the use of advanced rescue equipment in saving lives and reducing the impact of the disaster. Singh threw light on the fact that although disasters are tragic in themselves, their impact can be minimised with the use of advanced technology and how, in the recent avalanche, technologies like rotary rescue saws, thermal imaging, victim locating cameras, avalanche rods, and drone-based detection systems played a crucial role in saving lives.

Highlighting the importance of public awareness in disaster management, the Minister called for greater involvement of civil society in disaster preparedness.

Singh also stressed the

need for focused conferences on specific security challenges faced by different regions of the country.

“Security threats in India are not uniform. The issues faced in the North-east due to insurgencies are different from those in Naxal-affected areas or border regions. Similarly, urban security concerns are different from those in rural areas. We need to organise dedicated conferences that focus on region-specific challenges and solutions,” he said.

As part of the event, the Transfer of Technology (ToT) of the ASMI 9x19mm Machine Pistol was handed over by DRDO to Lokesh Machinery Tool, marking a step forward in the 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat' initiative.

Meanwhile, Secretary DDR&D and Chairman DRDO Samir V Kamat stated that more than 100 products from DRDO developed technologies have been or soon will be inducted into various agencies of MHA.

He further mentioned that the technologies which DRDO develops for the services are also being utilised in internal security as well as disaster relief operations.

Chief of the Army Staff General Upendra Dwivedi, Secretary (Border Management) Rajendra Kumar, Secretary (Defence Production) Sanjeev Kumar, DG (Production, Coordination & Services Interaction) Chandrika Kaushik and other senior officials were present.

# SC quashes rape case against Ex-Army Officer

New Delhi, Mar 4 (UNI)

The Supreme Court on Tuesday quashed all criminal proceedings in a rape case against former Indian Army officer Rakesh Walia, ruling that the complaint was “unbelievable” and constituted an “abuse of the process of law.”

A bench comprising Justice Sudhanshu Dhulia and Justice K. Vinod Chandran noted that apart from the complainant's statements, no evidence was on record to substantiate the allegations.

Additionally, it was found that the same complainant had filed eight other identical First Information Reports (FIRs) against different individuals across multiple police stations in Delhi, but later refused to cooperate with investigations.

The Bench emphasised that this was a case where the Delhi High Court should have exercised its powers under Section 482 of the Code of Criminal Procedure (now Section 528 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita) to quash the proceedings.

Since the High Court had dismissed Walia's plea for quashing the case, the Supreme Court set aside the order and terminated all proceedings.

The apex court noted that “Apart from her statement in the FIR and her



statement under Section 164 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973 (now under Section 183 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023), there is no other evidence on record. However, what is most concerning before this Court is that the same respondent has filed nearly identical cases against at least eight other individuals (nine cases in total).

These FIRs, lodged in different police stations across Delhi, involve offenses under Sections 34, 328, 354, 354A, 354D, 376, 377, 506, and 509 of the IPC. Additionally, we have been informed that after lodging the FIR, the complainant has not cooperated with the investigation and has not appeared before this Court despite being served with notice,” the Supreme Court observed.

The complainant had alleged that when she met the appellant regarding a modeling assignment, he

offered her a cold drink laced with sedatives, after which he raped her. However, the appellant refuted these claims, stating that their meeting was related to services she offered for promoting his books.

He asserted that he was an author of five books, some of which were best-sellers.

“Considering the nature of the case and the cumulative circumstances, we are of the opinion that the criminal case initiated against the appellant is nothing but an abuse of the process of law. This is precisely the kind of case where the High Court ought to have exercised its inherent powers under Section 482 Cr.P.C. (now under Section 528 B.N.S.S.) and should have quashed the proceedings,” the bench ruled.

Advocate on Record (AOR) Mr. Ashwani Kumar Dubey, and advocates Adwait Ghosh, and Chandra Shekhar appeared for the Appellant.

# Reservation quota hike issue rocks Bihar Assembly

## AGENCIES

PATNA, MAR 4 (UNI)

The opposition members created noise in support of the hike in the reservation quota from 50 to 65 percent in addition to the 10 percent reservation of economically backward class and for its inclusion in the Ninth Schedule of the constitution for its legal immunity.

While reading the adjournment notice in the Bihar Assembly during pre-lunch sitting here on Tuesday, Ranvijay Sahu said that the grand alliance government, based on the report of the caste survey had increased the



reservation quota for the backwards, extremely backwards, scheduled caste and schedule tribe up to 65 percent in addition to the 10 percent reservation quota for the economically weaker section.

Sahu, who was reading his information with the permission of the Speaker Nand Kishor Yadav who had already turned down the notice, said that the Bill

passed by the Bihar legislature in 2023 became an act and the grand alliance government had requested the union government to include it into the Ninth Schedule of the Constitution to make it immune from judicial scrutiny. He said the centre however rejected the demand.

Referring to the case of Tamilnadu, Sahu said that Tamil Nadu was enjoying

a similar facility as the law made by the Tamil Nadu government for a hike in reservation quota was included in the 9th schedule of the Indian Constitution by the then Narasimha Rao government to make it immune from judicial scrutiny.

Sahu demanded to include Bihar's reservation quota hike of 75 percent in the Ninth Schedule for its legal immunity.

The opposition members created noise over the issue from their places asking the Treasury benches to get the law made by the Bihar government in 2023 incorporated in the 9th schedule.

The Grand Alliance government of Bihar led by Chief Minister Nitish Kumar had made a law in November 2023 hiking the reservation quota from 50 to 65 percent in addition to the 10 percent reservation for the economically weaker sections. Kumar had also requested the Centre to include it in the 9th schedule to prevent its judicial scrutiny. A PIL was filed before the Patna High Court against the state government's decision and the Court had put a stay on it. The state government had moved the Supreme Court against the High Court's ruling.

# Doors always open for talks with farmers: Punjab CM

## AGENCIES

CHANDIGARH, MAR 4 (UNI)

Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Singh Mann categorically said that his doors are always open for talks with the farmers but inconvenience and harassment of the general public on the name of agitation should be avoided.

Interacting with the farmers during a meeting at Punjab Bhawan on Monday, he said that the government is always ready to resolve the issues pertaining to various sections of society through negotiations so that the trouble to the common man through rail or road blockades must be avoided.

He said that such action causes problems to the general people due to which they turn against the agitators thereby creat-



ing discord in the society. Mann said that unfortunately the common man has to suffer a lot due to such protests which is totally unwarranted and undesirable.

The Chief Minister said that though protest is democratic right of the farmers but they should also think that it is bringing huge loss to the state. He said that the traders and industrialists have been ruining that due to frequent road and rail blocks their businesses have been ruined.

Mann made fervent appeal to the farmers to

avoid such tactics that create discord amongst the society.

He said that though the state government is solidly with the farmers but all the demands of the food growers are concerned with the Union government. However, the CM said that due to the frequent protests by the farmers unions, Punjab and Punjabis have to face the heat.

Citing an example, Mann said that due to blockade of roads daily thousands of people have to suffer.

He urged the farm-

ers to refrain from creating inconvenience to the common man through their protests as it disrupts the daily routine of people.

The Chief Minister said that the rail and road blockades don't have any impact on the Union government but the life of common man is adversely affected by it. Mann further said that none of his previous predecessors had done so many meetings with the farmers to listen their problems.

However, he said that it is unfortunate that farmers still want to protest in the state for no reason related with the Punjab government.

The CM said that he is the custodian of the rights of every strata of the state and their interests will be secured by all ways and means.

Mann said that the

state government has already rejected the draft of National Policy Framework on Agricultural Marketing framed by Government of India.

He said that agriculture and agricultural marketing is a state subject and the Union government has no role to play in it. The Chief Minister said that the draft reflects the anti-Punjab and anti-farmers stance of the Union government.

Mann said that the state government has already opposed this draft tooth and nail through a written reply which was sent to the Union government.

He further said that the state government has already prepared the draft agriculture policy and added that the suggestions have been asked from all the stakeholders and it will be finalised once reply is received from all.

# Minister Dhananjay Munde resigns

## AGENCIES

MUMBAI, MAR 4 (UNI)

Amid the ongoing controversy over the Beed sarpanch murder case in Maharashtra, state food and civil supplies minister Dhananjay Munde resigned on Tuesday from Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis's ministry.

“Munde has submitted his resignation to me. I have accepted his resignation and sent it to the governor for further action,” said Fadnavis.

The Nationalist Congress Party-Ajit Pawar (NCP-AP) Minister Munde finally submitted his resignation after Valmik Karad, his close aide, was made an accused in the Beed Sarpanch Santosh Deshmukh murder case.

Since Karad's name surfaced in the murder case, leaders of the opposition



alliance had been persistently demanding Munde's resignation.

The opposition had warned that if Munde did not resign on Tuesday they would disrupt the proceedings of the assembly, which started its budget session on Monday.

Deshmukh, the sarpanch of Massajog village, was kidnapped and murdered in December 2024. Seven accused have since been arrested in the case. One accused is still absconding.

On February 27, the state Criminal Investiga-

tion Department submitted a chargesheet of about 1,200 pages in the Beed District Court, which includes Deshmukh's murder and two related cases.

Three separate cases have been registered at the Cage police station in Beed - the murder of Sarpanch, an attempt to extort money from the Awada company, and an attack on the company's security guard. Cases have been registered against the accused under the Maharashtra Control of Organised Crime Act (MCOCA).

# The Physiology and Benefits of Fasting



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

Recently, I was going through a booklet on Ramadhan – written by some doctors from UK and thought to write about such important topic to let our readers know about the same and encourage fasting as a means of great salvation – for overall health – physical, social, mental and more importantly spiritual.

Broadly speaking, what actually happens inside the body while fasting, describes the 'physiology of fasting'(in medical terms).

To make it clearly understood, the changes that occur in the body in response to fasting depend on the length of the continuous fast. Technically, the body enters into a fasting state eight hours or so after the last meal, when the gut finishes absorption of nutrients from the food.

In the normal state -- body glucose -- which is stored in the liver and muscles, remains the body's main source of energy and during a fast, this store of glucose is used up first to provide energy. Later in the fast, once the stores of glucose run out -- fat becomes the next store source of providing energy for the body. Moreover, small quantities of glucose are also produced through other mechanisms in the liver.

One should understand that only with a prolonged fast of many days to weeks continuously without eating anything in between, the body eventually turn to protein for energy. This is the short and technical description of what is commonly known as 'starvation' in medical terms, which is clearly unhealthy for one's body -- as it involves protein being released from the breakdown of muscle, which is why people who



starve look emaciated and become very weak.

While the Ramadan fast only extends from dawn till dusk -- there is ample opportunity to replenish energy stores at pre-dawn and dusk meals. This provides a progressive, gentle transition from using glucose to fat as the main source of energy and prevents the breakdown of muscle for protein.

Moreover, the use of fat for energy aids weight loss, preserving the muscles, and in the long run reduces one's cholesterol levels. As obesity(weight gain) is considered one of the crucial risk factor's for the development of many lifestyle diseases-- like diabetes, hypertension, heart diseases including others. So while fasting during Ramadan -- weight loss results in better control of diabetes, reduces blood pressure and the chances of heart diseases.

More to say, a detoxification process also seems to occur -- as any toxins stored in the body's fat are dissolved and removed from the body. And after a few days of the fast, higher levels of certain hormones appear in the blood (endorphins) --resulting in a better level of alertness and an overall feeling of general mental well-being.

It is pertinent to note that healthy cum balanced food and fluid intake is crucial between fasts. The kidney is very efficient at maintaining the body's water and salts, such as sodium and potassium. However, these can be lost through sweating. Therefore, meals must contain adequate levels of 'energy food', such as carbohydrates and some fat-- a balanced diet with adequate quantities of nutrients, salts and water.

While talking about the

benefits of fasting -- it is not only a physical but also a spiritual exercise that has many long lasting benefits:

Heightening consciousness of Almighty Allah -- fasting helps one to become less pre-occupied with bodily appetites, and gives one's heart and mind the freedom to reflect upon deeper spiritual relationship with Almighty Allah and fellow human beings. Broadly, it makes a person capable to develop sustained consciousness of Almighty Allah (Taqwa).

Developing healthy lifestyle -- fasting person learns restraint, and only responds to hunger and thirst in the heightened level of consciousness and discipline. Fasting enables a person to acknowledge the value of food. In the Holy Qur'an "healthy and wholesome food" is described as the best of provisions -- thus fasting helps a person to choose a healthier lifestyle by making small yet lasting healthy changes to their daily diet.

Encouraging compassion and charity -- Fasting enables a person to think of those who are in need, who may be fasting but have no food at the start or the end of their fast, those whose little children are also having to go hungry because of poverty. The Prophet Muhammad(SAW) described Ramadan as "the month of mercy". His beloved companions observed, "The Prophet Muhammad(SAW) was the most generous of people, but he would be his most generous during Ramadan..."(Sahih al-Bukhari)

Developing community spirit -- during Ramadan, the one who fasts has highest levels of concern for the well-being of the com-

munity - rich and poor, intellectuals and labourers. Community spirit is promoted as people start fasting at the same time and break their fast at the same time, and reflect together through longer prayers and deeper devotions. Besides, it is greatly encouraged that families invite each other to break their fast together.

Breaking bad habits -- Ramadan is an ideal time to break bad habits, to reflect on one's personality and to improve and positively develop one's character. It is an opportunity to make healthy lifestyle choices -- being mindful of how one fast and how one break their fast can help to improve one's overall health - both physical and mental.

Quitting smoking --Ramadhan is a good opportunity to quit smoking. Smoking is wasteful and seriously injurious to health. Almighty Allah has entrusted us with a healthy body, and it is a violation to knowingly and willingly harm it. Ramadan provides a great opportunity to make healthy lifestyle choices and amend many bad habits -- and smoking is indeed one of them.

Renewing spirit -- abstention for long hours can be very hard physically and spiritually. However, by the end of the long month one should feel cleansed and with a renewed spirit. Prophet Muhammad(PBUH) stressed in a number of sayings -- fasting is not merely "abstention from eating and drinking, but also from vain speech and foul language"... (Sahih al-Bukhari). Those who fast but make no change to their lives except delaying a meal cannot really expect to become any different in their behaviour during or after Ramadan. Therefore, fasting is about, much more than just giving up food and drink and hoping to lose a couple of pounds. By fasting, a person reflects, acts and betters his or her character.

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# HT-HEALTH

## Indian API market to expand to \$22 bn by 2030, at a CAGR of 8.3 pc: Report

**AGENCIES**  
NEW DELHI

India's Active Pharmaceutical Ingredients (APIs) market is expected to expand to \$22 billion by 2030, according to a report on Monday.

The report by Praxis Global Alliance, a management consulting firm, stated that the APIs are growing at a CAGR of 8.3 pc in the country.

APIs are biologically active components in drugs that provide pharmacological activity or direct effects in disease treatment. For instance, in common medications like Crocin, paracetamol functions as the API, directly responsible for the drug's pain-relieving properties.

The report noted that "India is also the third-largest global producer of APIs, with an 8 per cent market share and over 500 different APIs manufactured".



"India contributes 57 per cent of the APIs on the WHO's prequalified list. The market is expected to expand from \$18 billion in 2024 to \$22 billion by 2030, growing at a CAGR of 8.3 per cent," said Madhur Singhal, Managing Partner, Pharma and Life-sciences at Praxis Global Alliance.

APIs represent a significant part of India's pharmaceutical market, contributing approximately 35 per cent of the sector's value.

"These crucial components account for 40 per cent of overall drug manufacturing costs on average,

though this figure can rise to 70-80 per cent depending on market conditions," Singhal said.

The expert said that although the Indian API sector is growing it faces challenges in the storage and transportation of thermolabile drugs, cold chain-dependent pharmaceuticals, and compliance with new barcoding systems.

In addition, it is also facing cost advantages of foreign suppliers; infrastructural issues; and supply chain vulnerabilities. The sector also grapples with stringent environmental regulations,

especially around effluent treatment and waste management, which increase production costs and lead to negative public perception, Singhal said.

To address these challenges, the Indian government implemented several schemes such as the Production Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme (2020-30); a scheme for the promotion of bulk drug parks (2020-25), and a PLI scheme for pharmaceuticals (2020-29).

These government initiatives have led to "a notable shift in the industry landscape. Companies are increasingly investing in API production facilities to meet domestic demand and reduce reliance on imports. The segment is witnessing heightened competition for management-level executives due to the influx of private equity-owned platform companies entering the market," Singhal said.

## Ketamine, psychedelic use may raise death risk by 2.6-fold: Study

**AGENCIES**  
NEW DELHI

The use of hallucinogens, such as ketamine and psychedelics can raise the risk of death by 2.6-fold, according to a study on Monday.

Researchers from The Ottawa Hospital in Canada noted that the use of hallucinogens including psilocybin, LSD, ayahuasca, and MDMA (ecstasy), has rapidly increased since the mid-2010s.

Increasing use may partially also reflect growing medical and societal interest in pairing psychedelics with psychotherapy for mental health and substance use disorders, said the team.

However, although psychedelic-assisted therapy trials have generally been safe, there is little data about whether hallucinogens might increase the risk of adverse events, such as thoughts of suicide and death, when used out-



side of carefully controlled clinical trial settings or in populations currently excluded from trials.

"Despite the growing popularity of hallucinogen use, we know surprisingly little about potential adverse effects of hallucinogens, such as mortality risks. Contemporary clinical trials have not observed any short-term increase in the risk of severe adverse events, including death, for trial participants. However, these studies involve careful supervision and therapy for trial participants

and exclude people at high risk of adverse outcomes," said Dr. Daniel Myran, a family physician and public health and preventive medicine physician-researcher at The Ottawa Hospital.

To better understand the link, the team looked at health care data on emergency department visits, hospitalisations, and outpatient physician visits for more than 11.4 million people in Ontario aged 15-105 years. Of the total group, 7,954 sought acute care for hallucinogen use.

The risk of death within 5 years for people who sought acute care for hallucinogen use was almost 10 times that of someone of the same age and sex in the general population, as per findings published in CMAJ (Canadian Medical Association Journal).

Individuals who received acute care for hallucinogen use also had more medical comorbidities.

People needing acute care for hallucinogen use were more likely to live in low-income neighbourhoods, to have been homeless at the time of a previous acute care visit, to have chronic health conditions, and/or to have received care for a mental health problem or substance use disorder in the previous 3 years.

They were at higher risk of death than people who sought alcohol-related acute care, but at lower risk of death than people needing acute care for opioid or stimulant use.

"The findings highlight the need for ongoing investigation of and communication about both potential benefits and risks from hallucinogen use, particularly use outside clinical trial settings, given rapid increases in general population use," said Dr. Marco Solmi, psychiatrist at The Ottawa Hospital and associate professor, University of Ottawa.

## Sleep apnoea can raise risk of Parkinson's disease: Study

**AGENCIES**  
NEW DELHI

People with obstructive sleep apnoea have an increased risk of suffering from Parkinson's disease, according to a study.

Obstructive sleep apnoea is when throat muscles relax during sleep, blocking the airway, causing a person to wake up repeatedly to breathe. This disrupted sleep pattern can lower oxygen levels, affecting the brain.

Researchers from the VA Portland Health Care System in Oregon, US looked at rates of Parkinson's disease five years after a sleep apnoea diagnosis. They reviewed more than 20 years of medical records to identify nearly 1.6 million older adults who had obstructive sleep apnoea.

After adjusting for age, sex, and health factors such as smoking, they found among people with sleep apnoea, there



were 1.8 more cases of Parkinson's disease per 1,000 people compared to people without sleep apnoea.

Parkinson's is a chronic and progressive neurodegenerative disease. Sleep disorders are one of the most common non-motor symptoms in Parkinson's patients.

Notably, the study showed that using continuous positive airway pressure (CPAP) may help reduce the risk. With CPAP, pressurised air is

delivered through a mask to keep the airway open while a person sleeps.

The study found using CPAP within two years of a sleep apnoea diagnosis reduced the risk of Parkinson's -- 2.3 fewer cases per 1,000 people when compared to people who did not use CPAP.

"Obstructive sleep apnoea is common, and previous research has found that when untreated, it is associated with an increased risk of heart attack and stroke," said

Gregory D. Scott, of the VA Institute.

"While our study found an increased risk of Parkinson's disease, the good news is people can do something about it by using CPAP as soon as they are diagnosed with the sleep disorder," he added.

The findings will be presented at the American Academy of Neurology's 77th Annual Meeting scheduled to take place from April 5-9 in San Diego, US.

## Brown fat may promote healthful longevity

NEW YORK

A team of US researchers has made discoveries about brown fat that may open a new path to helping people stay physically fit as they age.

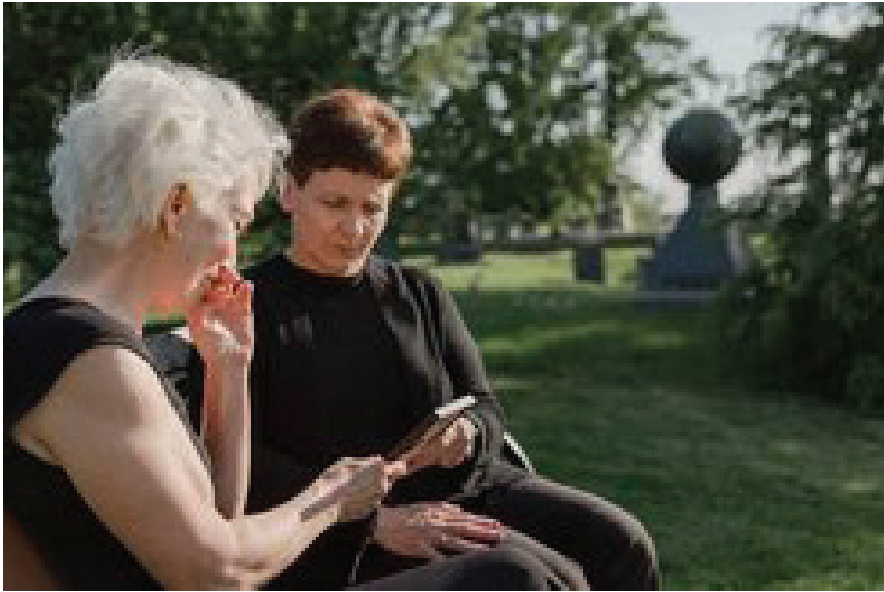
The team from Rutgers University's New Jersey Medical School found that mice lacking a specific gene developed an unusually potent form of brown fat tissue that expanded lifespan and increased exercise capacity by roughly 30 per cent.

The team is working on a drug that could mimic these effects in humans.

"Exercise capacity diminishes as you get older, and to have a technique that could enhance exercise performance would be very beneficial for healthful aging," said Stephen Vatner, university professor and senior author of the study published in Aging Cell.

"This mouse model performs exercise better than their normal littermates," he added.

Unlike white fat, which stores energy, brown fat



burns calories and helps regulate body temperature. This study revealed brown fat also plays a crucial role in exercise capacity by improving blood flow to muscles during physical activity.

The genetically modified mice produced unusually high amounts of active brown fat and showed about 30 per cent better exercise performance than normal mice, both in speed and time to exhaust-

tion. The discovery emerged from broader research into healthy aging. The modified mice, which lack a protein called RGS14, live about 20 per cent longer than normal mice, with females living longer than males - similar to the pattern seen in humans.

The discovery could eventually improve human lifespans - the total time when people enjoy good mental and physical

health.

"With all the medical advances, aging and longevity have increased in humans, but unfortunately, healthful aging hasn't," Vatner said.

There are a lot of diseases associated with aging - obesity, diabetes, myocardial ischemia, heart failure, cancer - and what we have to do is find new drugs based on models of healthful aging, said authors.



## Manchester City's Ake sidelined again after foot surgery

### AGENCIES

LONDON, MAR 4

Manchester City's Nathan Ake is set for another spell on the sidelines after undergoing surgery on a fractured foot.

The Netherlands defender, 30, came off at half-time in Saturday's FA Cup win over Plymouth with an injury that he said, "has been bothering me for months," the BBC reported.

Ake had an operation on Monday and, afterwards, posted a picture of himself on social media., external

"This has been such a frustrating season for me, but I have now had a successful surgery on a fracture in my foot, which has been bothering me for months," he said.

## Ahmedabad Open Golf Championship tees-off on March 4

### AGENCIES

AHMEDABAD, MARCH 3

The Professional Golf Tour of India (PGTI) will stage the second edition of the Ahmedabad Open Golf Championship at the Kensville Golf Country Club here from March 4.

The 4-day event, sponsored by IndusInd Bank, carries a prize purse of Rs 1 crore, in association with Gujarat Tourism and Kensville Golf Country Club is the host venue.

The Pro-Am will follow the main event on March 8.

The tournament is set to feature some of the top Indian professionals such as Om Prakash Chouhan, Manu Gandas, Udayan Mane, Shaurya Bhattacharya, Rashid Khan, Karandeep Kochhar, Chikkarangappa S and Sachin Baisoya, to name a few.

## Proteas chase final amid semifinal jinx against Kiwis

### AGENCIES

LAHORE, MAR 4

South Africa and New Zealand will lock horns in the second ICC Champions Trophy semifinal at Gaddafi Stadium here on Wednesday, with both sides aiming to break past their history of heartbreaks at this stage of ICC tournaments.

South Africa, known for their dominant performances throughout the tournament, have entered their third ICC semifinal since 2023, displaying remarkable consistency across all departments.

The Proteas have been led by the prolific Ryan Rickelton and Rassie van der Dussen, who have been in sublime form with the bat, while the return of Heinrich Klaasen adds further firepower to the middle order. However, Keshav Maharaj will be under pressure to deliver with the ball after a relatively quiet run in the tournament.

New Zealand, on the other hand, started the tournament on a strong note but faced a setback against India in the last Group A match. Their top order struggled against the Indian bowling attack, with Kane Williamson being the lone warrior as none of the other top-



five batsmen managed to score beyond 20 runs. Captain Mitchell Santner will be banking on Rachin Ravindra, Tom Latham, and the rest of the squad to step up in this crunch encounter.

Both teams have had their fair share of semifinal woes in ICC events. South Africa, in particular, have endured heartbreaks, having reached five ODI World Cup semifinals, three in the T20 World Cup, and five in the ICC Champions Trophy, but winning just two of them. The Proteas will be eager to break the jinx and secure a berth in the final.

The match will also see a contest between two potent bowling attacks. Marco Jansen and Matt Henry have been instru-

mental in their respective teams' success, delivering crucial breakthroughs with fiery spells. With the stakes high, their ability to strike early and control the game in the middle overs could prove decisive.

Dussen, South Africa's leading run-scorer among active players since his debut in 2019, remains a key figure in the batting lineup. His ability to handle pressure was evident in the ICC ODI World Cup last time, where he smashed a match-winning 133 against New Zealand.

With both teams eyeing a place in the final, the semifinal clash is expected to be a riveting battle of skill, strategy, and composure. Execution will be key as the teams brace

for a contest that could define their tournament campaign.

Teams:

New Zealand: Will Young, Rachin Ravindra, Kane Williamson, Daryl Mitchell, Tom Latham (WK), Glenn Phillips, Michael Bracewell, Mitchell Santner (C), Matt Henry, Kyle Jamieson, William O'Rourke, Nathan Smith, Mark Chapman, Jacob Duffy, Devon Conway.

South Africa: Ryan Rickelton (wk), Temba Bavuma (c), Tony de Zorzi, Rassie van der Dussen, Aiden Markram, David Miller, Marco Jansen, Wiaan Mulder, Keshav Maharaj, Kagiso Rabada, Lungi Ngidi, Tabraiz Shamsi, Heinrich Klaasen, Tristan Stubbs, Corbin Bosch.

## Ashwin urges Rohit to open with Chakaravathy against Head in semis vs Australia



### AGENCIES

NEW DELHI, MARCH 4

Former India spin veteran Ravichandran Ashwin shared an antidote to tackle Travis Head in the Champions Trophy semifinal against Australia, suggesting captain Rohit Sharma give the new ball to mystery spinner Varun Chakaravathy and ask him to bowl over the stumps to the left-hander Aussie.

Chakaravathy put on an impressive show in India's final group game against New Zealand on Sunday. Playing only his second ODI game for India, the leg-spinner claimed the wickets of opener Will Young, Glenn Phillips, Michael Bracewell, Mitchell Santner and Matt Henry to end up with the figures of 5-42, his maiden ODI fiver, as India bowled the Black Caps out for 205 in their chase of 250.

"New ball and give it to Varun and ask him to

bowl over the stumps to Travis Head," Ashwin said on his Youtube channel 'Ash Ki Baat'. "Travis Head shows all his three stumps and then clears his leg and hit it over the field. Varun Chakaravathy with new ball might give India an edge. It will be a mouth watering contest," he added.

Head was the Australian hero with the bat when Australia pulled off victory in the 2023 World Cup final in Ahmedabad against host India. The left-handed opener scored 137 from 120 balls as Australia reached a target of 241 with seven overs to spare, snapping the Men in Blue's 10-match winning streak in the tournament.

"I would be very surprised if Travis Head will take on a back seat against Varun. He would love to go aggressive and it will high-risk option. Either he will give Australia good start or India will get him out cheaply.



**Tral-i -payeen**  
Tral-Kashmir-192123

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