



BUDGET SESSION 2025:

CM Omar Abdullah says
RDSS being implemented to
curb losses, modernize
power infrastructure

■ HT News Network

JAMMU, MARCH05: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah today stated that Revamped Distribution Sector Scheme (RDSS) is being implemented to curb losses and modernize power infrastructure in Jammu and Kashmir. Responding to a question from member



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Gurez emerging as a
tourist destination: CM
Omar Abdullah

■ HT News Network

JAMMU, MARCH05: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah today said that Gurez valley has recently gained significant recognition as a tourist destination and Tourism department would assess the need for establishing a Tourism Development Authority for Gurez. Responding to a question by member Nazir Ahmad Khan Gurezi, the Chief Minister informed the House that Gurez Valley in Jammu and Kashmir has recently been in the

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Deputy CM assures
expeditious completion of
all road projects in J&K

■ HT News Network

JAMMU, MARCH05: "The work on all ongoing prestigious road projects in Jammu and Kashmir shall be expedited for timely completion", assured Deputy Chief Minister, Surinder Kumar Choudhary, while replying to a supplementary raised in the Legislative Assembly here today. The Deputy Chief Minister said



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Existing healthcare facilities
being upgraded
expeditiously: Sakeena Itoo

■ HT News Network

JAMMU, MARCH05: Minister for Health and Medical Education, Social Welfare and Education, Sakeena Itoo, today said that the existing healthcare facilities are being upgraded expeditiously to cater to the needs of people of the Union Territory. The Minister made these remarks while replying



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Discussion on LG's
address resumes in LA

■ HT News Network

JAMMU, MARCH05: Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly witnessed discussions for the second day on the Motion of Thanks for Lieutenant Governor's address delivered to the legislature on the first day of the Budget session. The debate covered wide array of topics including Indus Water Treaty, filling up of vacancies in government departments, rationalisation of reservation policy and return of power projects. Initiating the debate, Surjit Singh Slathia, said that the people have

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Lieutenant Governor chairs
48th meeting of Shri Amarnath
Ji Shrine Board

Shri Amarnath Ji Yatra will begin on 3rd July



■ HT News Network

JAMMU, MARCH05: Lieutenant Governor Shri Manoj Sinha chaired the 48th Board meeting of Shri Amarnath Ji Shrine Board (SASB) at Raj Bhawan, today.

This year, Shri Amarnath Ji Yatra will commence on 3rd July, simultaneously from both the routes – the Pahalgam track in Anantnag district and Baltal in Ganderbal district and it will culminate on 9th August, 2025 on Raksha Bandhan.

The meeting was attended by Swami Avdheshanand Giri Ji Maharaj, Shri D. C. Raina, Smt. Kailash Mehra Sadhu, Shri K. N. Rai, Shri Pitambar Lal Gupta, Dr. Shailesh Raina and Prof Vishwamurti Shastri, Mem-

bers of the Shrine Board.

The Board proposed various measures and interventions to further improve the facilities and services for the devotees.

Considering the likely increased inflow of pilgrims for Shri Amarnath Ji Yatra-2025, the meeting discussed measures for the enhancement of lodgement capacity at centres in Jammu, Srinagar and other locations, operationalization of Yatri facilitation centres for e-KYC, issuance of RFID cards, on-spot registration of pilgrims at number of locations including Nowgam and Katra Railway Stations.

It was further discussed that these facilities must also be suitably enhanced at Baltal, Pahalgam, Nunwan, Pantha Chowk Srinagar,

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Pandemonium in Assembly over BJP leader Sunil Sharma's
controversial remarks on martyrs of July 13, 1931

BJP stages walkout from House after speaker expunges utterances

■ HT News Network

Jammu, Mar 05: Pandemonium broke out in the Legislative Assembly on Wednesday over BJP leader Sunil Sharma's controversial remarks that the martyrs of July 13, 1931, were traitors.

Speaking during the discussion on the LG's address, PDP MLA Waheed-ur-Rehman Para, as per news agency—demanded the restoration of the Martyrs Day holiday. "The BJP cannot do justice until it restores the Martyrs Day holiday. They rendered sacrifices

for democracy and India. It is due to their sacrifices that we have got this House," Para said.

Para demanded that the House should resolve collectively to restore both holidays. "The disrespect to Sheikh Abdullah's legacy was disrespect to every person carrying the Indian flag in J&K," he said.

After Para concluded his speech, Sharma questioned the PDP and NC's silence over civilian killings in Kashmir during their tenures. "When they (PDP) were in alliance with us in 2016-17, how many civilian killings took place? Why didn't they shed tears for them?



When Omar Abdullah was in power, 110 civilian killings took place. Why didn't you shed tears then?" Sharma asked.

Sharma then stated that those

killed on July 13, 1931, were traitors. "They were traitors; they were not martyrs," he said, evoking protests from MLAs of the ruling alliance as well as from Kashmir-based opposition parties, including PDP and PC.

Amid the commotion in the House, NC and other parties resorted to massive sloganeering in favour of the martyrs of July 13, 1931. "These remarks should be expunged. It is their sacrifices you are here (Assembly). You would have been slaves and washing utensils of the Maharaja," NC's Nazir Gurezi shouted at BJP lawmakers.

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J&K Requires Environmental Assessment
for All Development Activities: Para

■ HT News Network

Jammu Mar 05: Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) MLA Waheed-ur-Rehman Para on Monday emphasized that Jammu and Kashmir requires periodic environmental assessments for all activities carried out in the name of development.

Para highlighted that a significant mafia in Jammu and Kashmir is exploiting the region's natural resources.

Speaking to reporters on the sidelines

of the Legislative Assembly Budget Session 2025, Para, as per the news agency—stated, "Jammu and Kashmir has witnessed the highest level of soil, sand, and stone mining in recent years, and there is a huge mafia behind it."

"Due to mining and large-scale development, extensive destruction is occurring in J&K, particularly in the ecologically fragile Kashmir region," he added.

Para further noted that Jammu and

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J&K records 30% excess rainfall in 5 days
Back to wet spells recharge water bodies, Met
predicts more precipitation from Mar 10

■ HT News Network

Srinagar, Mar 05: Jammu and Kashmir has recorded 30 per cent above the average precipitation in the past five days, thereby increasing the water level in the river Jhelum and other streams.

As per the data accessed by the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), against the average rainfall of 25.4mm, Jammu and Kashmir has recorded a rainfall of 33mm from March 1 to 5. The highest precipitation was recorded in Bandipora with details revealing that the station recorded 68% rainfall above than the average precipitation.

As per the data, nine stations including Srinagar, the summer capital of J&K, Budgam, Baramulla,

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Dr. Jitendra Singh affirms 'Huge democratisation of Civil
Services, IAS no longer confined to an elite section'

■ HT News Network

New Delhi, March 05: Union Minister of State for Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions, Dr. Jitendra Singh affirms 'Huge democratisation of Civil Services, IAS no longer confined to an elite section' at the Indian Express Next Gen Conclave "Excellence in Governance Awards" held on Tuesday. In his address, Dr. Jitendra Singh



highlighted the profound democratization of the Indian Administrative Service (IAS), noting that it is no longer restricted to an elite section of society. The minister pointed out that the Civil Services have evolved to represent the diverse fabric of India, ensuring broader accessibility for citizens from various backgrounds.

Reflecting on India's journey post-Independence, Dr. Singh

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Congress UT Chief Urges CM not to Shy Away from the Issue of Statehood Restoration

Form house panel of all parties to follow up statehood matter with Centre: Karra

■ HT News Network

JAMMU, MARCH 5: Congress chief whip and MLA Bandipora Nizamuddin Bhat on Wednesday urged the government to form a house panel of all parties that would follow the issue of statehood restoration with the Central government.

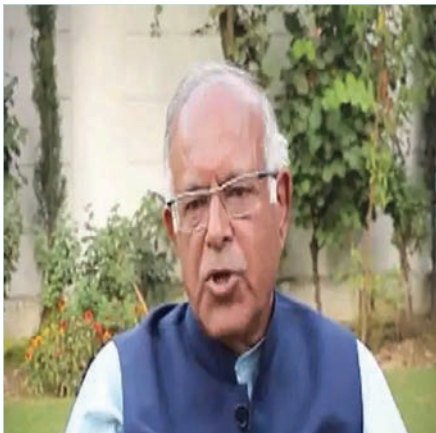
Speaking in the Assembly on the issue of statehood restoration, the senior Congress leader, as per news agency—said that there should be no delay in following up the matter with the Central government as delay is doing more harm than any good.

He said that for this it is imperative for

the house to form a committee, which would follow up the statehood matter with the Central government and the national parties of the country.

"There are two options for us, either we go to the government or we go to the people of India. This house should form a committee of all parties to check sincerity of everyone over the issue. I urge the Chief Minister as he has a massive mandate, he will be respected in any democracy that he has come to represent the aspirations of the people," Bhat said.

He also urged the Chief Minister to not shy away from the matter and that himself nominates a house panel of all parties, and



seek time from the Prime Minister and the Home Minister. "The delegation led by the Chief Minister put this case before the Central government as this is the state which is in limbo with a denigrated status. We have not been alleviated to some status that we will take pride in," he said.

Bhat said that it is the responsibility of the Chief Minister, the house and its members that if they are sincere with their people, let's be quick on it and be assertive. "We already have a case and the Parliament has also promised us. Let there be either an All-Party delegation or a panel of the house to follow up this matter," he said—

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'Not a security threat':
Engineer Rashid tells Delhi
court, seeks custody parole

■ HT News Network

New Delhi — Jailed Jammu and Kashmir MP Engineer Rashid on Wednesday sought custody parole to attend the upcoming Parliament session, claiming he was not a security threat.

Rashid's counsel made the submission before additional sessions judge Chanderjit Singh, who reserved the verdict for March 7 after hearing arguments on the plea. The plea seeking Rashid's interim bail or custody parole was filed by advocate Vikhyat Oberoi on February 27,

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Sajad Lone questions NC over
decades of bloodshed in J&K

■ HT News Network

Srinagar, Mar 5, :: The Jammu and Kashmir Assembly on Wednesday saw intense discussions as Handwara MLA Sajad Gani Lone questioned past governments, particularly the National Conference (NC), over decades of violence in the region.

Speaking in the House, Lone raised concerns over the loss of lives in Jammu and Kashmir, asking who should be held accountable. He said that while many had died, political discourse often overlooked responsibility. Responding to NC MLA Shamima Firdous, he said that large-scale violence occurred under NC's rule from 1996–2002 and 2008–2014, yet no one was held answerable. Lone also referred to the case of Shabir Shah, a separatist leader who has spent over 45 years in jail.

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Legislators question transparency
in JJM implementation, seek probe

■ HT News Network

Srinagar March 05: : Several legislators on Wednesday called for an investigation into the Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM), alleging irregularities in its implementation.

Some of them demanded formation of a House committee to look into the matter.

During the Question Hour, Minister for Jal Shakti Javed Rana while responding to a query by Dr. Mohammad Shafi Wani, according to the news agency—

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CONTINUE FROM FRONT PAGE.....

CM

Shakti Raj Parihar in the Legislative Assembly, the Chief Minister, who also holds the Power Development portfolio, said that J&K's transmission and distribution losses are among the highest in India.

He noted that these losses are significantly higher compared to neighboring states like Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand.

"And until we are not able to control this situation, our current AT&C losses are around 50%. For every rupee worth of electricity we supply, we face a loss of around 50 paise. We will have to gradually reduce this and bring it in line with the levels of neighboring states. For this, the RDSS scheme has been implemented," he said. The Chief Minister was replying to a starred question about the total funds allocated and utilized under the Revamped Distribution Sector Scheme (RDSS) for the member's constituency. He explained that under RDSS, in addition to smart metering works, funds have been sanctioned for various "Loss Reduction (LR)" works.

These include AB cabling, HVDS, reconductoring, feeder bifurcation, and segregation, depending on district-specific technical requirements.

The funds for LR works have been sanctioned at the district level rather than for individual constituencies, he added.

The Chief Minister informed the House that the sanctioned cost for LR works in Doda District is 86.28 crore, with the works awarded in September 2023.

"The funds for these works are being released by the Ministry of Power (MoP) in different tranches based on the progress of the projects. So far, 17 crore has been released in two tranches, both of which have been fully utilized. Funds for the next tranche are being sought as per the norms of the scheme," he said.

Addressing concerns about the slow progress of RDSS projects, the Chief Minister explained that after the issuance of the sanction order, the package (including Doda district) was tendered for the first time on March 31, 2023.

"However, due to a poor response, the tendering process had to be extended three times. Finally, the bid was opened on August 4, 2023, and awarded on September 8, 2023," he stated.

He further informed that 12.25% progress has been achieved so far, and the works are moving forward at full pace with no delays.

"Going by the current pace, it is expected that the works in Doda district will be completed well within the sunset date of RDSS, which is March 31, 2026," he added.

The Chief Minister further stated that the RDSS Detailed Project Reports (DPRs) were formulated in two parts, one which includes Loss Reduction (LR) works and smart metering projects and part b which covers modernization works.

"The DPRs for both parts were submitted to the Ministry of Power (MoP). However, the sanction has been received only for Part A works," he said. Regarding Part B, the Chief Minister mentioned that the DPRs are currently at the appraisal stage with the Nodal Agency of MoP.

"Once the Part B DPRs are sanctioned by MoP, the modernization works will be awarded as per the terms and conditions specified in the sanction order," he concluded.

OMAR

spotlight as a tourist destination.

"In 2022, Gurez Valley received the 'Best Offbeat Destination' award, emphasizing its appeal as a unique and emerging tourist spot," he said.

The Chief Minister, who also holds the portfolio of Tourism Minister, further stated that in September 2023, Dawar village in Gurez was honored with the 'Best Tourism Village' award in the Gold category by the Union Ministry of Tourism.

"This accolade highlights the village's cultural richness and tourism potential," he informed the Legislative Assembly.

To promote Gurez as a new tourist destination, he added, the Department of Tourism, Jammu and Kashmir, has taken several initiatives, and in 2024, commercial rafting was started in Gurez for the first time ever.

Besides, during the current financial year, the Department of Tourism, J&K, has projected the upgradation of Gurez as an offbeat destination under the current year Capex Budget (2024-25), the Chief Minister stated in his reply.

DY CM

that the macadamization work on the road project along old Bringi Canal from Hiller to Wandevelgam, was successfully completed in March 2023 under the languishing scheme. However, two spots at Adigam (length 150m) and Nagam (length 140m) remained pending due to the presence of existing structures and trees obstructing the alignment.

The Dy CM was replying to a question raised by Zafar Ali Khatana in the Legislative Assembly. He also informed that the Hangalgund-Kharpora road project stands completed in the year 2022 under PMGSY.

In a written reply to a question, the Dy CM

said that there is no proposal under consideration for up-gradation and widening of Hangalgund- Puro road as of now.

Regarding fund allocation under NABARD, the Dy CM maintained that the funds under the scheme are released every year for approved projects against the sanctioned cost and work done.

ITOO

to a starred question of MLA, Dr. Narinder Singh, on healthcare facilities in Greater Kailash and Sainik Colony.

The Minister said that an Urban Public Health Centre (UPHC) is providing a range of healthcare services to the people at Sainik Colony. She informed that 5 regular healthcare professionals (Doctors and Paramedics) and additional 8 doctors and paramedics, engaged under NHM, have been deployed at the facility to supplement existing staff strength. She further informed that there are also several other healthcare facilities in the close proximity of 1-3 km like NTPHC Channi Himmat, Sub-Centre Sainik Colony and Sub-Center Lower Chowadhi.

Regarding the secondary and tertiary level healthcare services, the Minister said that the Government Hospital Gandhinagar, Rajeev Gandhi Hospital Gangyal, GMC Jammu and its Associated Hospitals are also available within 3-6 km of distance.

The Minister also informed that under universal health insurance initiative of J&K, Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB-PMJAY)- SEHAT scheme, several private empanelled hospitals are also providing treatments to the eligible beneficiaries in close proximity of Sainik Colony and Greater Kailash areas of Jammu.

LA

ected us to solve their problems and we have a responsibility to live upto their expectations. He praised the efforts of Chief Minister, Omar Abdullah, who for the first time, held series of district level consultations regarding the budget preparation. "We do not doubt CM Omar Abdullah's intentions and we do understand that the government is in its nascent stage so we hope that they will fulfil all the promises made with the people of Jammu and Kashmir," he asserted.

Singh further said that abrogation of Article 370 has brought a new dawn of development in Jammu and Kashmir.

While commenting on the Motion of Thanks, Dr Basheer Ahmad Veeri hailed the Omar Abdullah government for taking a unique initiative of holding meetings with different sections of the society to ensure the budget is reflective of the needs and priorities of all regions. He said that it is for the first time that people have participated in the Assembly elections in such large number.

Veeri talked about the Indus Water treaty saying that it prevents Jammu and Kashmir from utilizing the water's full potential for Hydel Power generation. He also deliberated about the issue of filling up of all vacancies in the government departments besides other developmental needs of people.

Nizamuddin Bhat, in his speech, said that, "We have to take strong initiatives for restoration of statehood and nominate an all party delegation or a panel of the house that would present the case to the Union Government," he maintained.

He said that it is constitutionally imperative on the Union Government to restore statehood to Jammu and Kashmir and respect their promises made on the floor of the Parliament.

Ghulam Mohiuddin Mir talked on unemployment in Jammu and Kashmir saying that concrete steps need to be taken for creating employment opportunities for the people here.

Rajeev Jasrotia praised the Omar Abdullah government for taking into confidence all stakeholders, elected representatives before formulation of the budget saying that it is for the first time in history that pre-budget consultations were held. He also reminded the government of the promises made in the manifesto that were supposed to be fulfilled within the first three months. He said that certain issues in the manifesto were missing in the Lieutenant Governor's address.

He also highlighted many initiatives taken by BJP led government and said that we will work as a respectable opposition for the welfare of people.

Waheed Para, while participating in the debate, said that the good governance must be ensured for the people. He also urged the Chief Minister to raise the issue of Jammu and Kashmir's youth at the appropriate forum.

Participating in the debate, Javaid Riyaz, said that we should work collectively for restoration of statehood.

Irfan Hafeez Lone said that it is good that the government is committed for full restoration of statehood and I hope that Omar Abdullah will live up to this expectation of the people. "When we are on the same page, we should take a united front for restoration of statehood," he added.

He also talked about the issue of casual labours, free electricity, return of power projects, sustainable development and protection of fragile environment among other issues.

Ali Mohd Sagar, while participating in

discussion on Motion of Thanks on LG's address, said that the people of Jammu and Kashmir have given a thumping mandate to this Government. He added that this government is the voice of the people and in coming time all the commitments will be fulfilled by this government.

LG

as per the requirement.

Reviewing the progress achieved on various ongoing works undertaken by the line departments, the Lieutenant Governor stressed on the need for ensuring adequate arrangements and requisite amenities at various locations enroute Yatra. He further called for increasing capacity at Yatri Niwas, Pantha Chowk, Srinagar.

The meeting also discussed ongoing projects, dissemination of Yatra-related information, insurance cover to yatris, service providers, ponies; extension of online services by the Shrine Board; widening and maintenance of Yatra Tracks; decongestion measures at Holy Cave and Lower Holy Cave area; Disaster preparedness and mitigation measures; adequate provisioning of Heli services, medical care facilities; Weather Forecasting Infrastructure & Systems, security and surveillance and Digital Pre-paid system for hiring services.

On the occasion, the Lieutenant Governor felicitated the Board Members and expressed gratitude for their valuable contribution and continuous guidance in successful conduct of the yatra.

Dr Mandeep K. Bhandari, Chief Executive Officer, Shri Amarnath Ji Shrine Board, gave a detailed presentation regarding the arrangements for the Yatra.

Shri Atal Dulloo, Chief Secretary; Shri Shaheen Kabra, Additional Chief Secretary, Jal Shakti Department; Shri Nalin Prabhat, DGP; Shri Chandraker Bharti, Principal Secretary Home; Administrative Secretaries; Divisional Commissioner Jammu; Divisional Commissioner Kashmir; Deputy Commissioners (Ganderbal and Anantnag); Additional CEO SASB and senior officers of the UT Administration and Shrine Board also attended the meeting, in person and through virtual mode.

SHARMA

CPI(M) MLA Muhammad Yosouf Tarigami said that these remarks are not acceptable and should be expunged. "When a derogatory, humiliating, and divisive remark is made, it should be withdrawn. If you don't show that kind of decency, it should be expunged," Congress MLA Nizamuddin Bhat said.

Amid continuous disruptions in the House, the Speaker announced that the remarks had been expunged from the records of the Assembly. All BJP MLAs staged a walkout from the House in protest against the Speaker's decision.

After BJP MLAs walked out of the House, PC MLA Sajad Gani Lone asked MLAs to raise their hands to pass a suo-moto resolution for the declaration of both the days as holidays. The MLAs raised their hands in favour of declaring both the days as holidays—(KNO)

PARRA

Kashmir's fragile ecology is already under strain, citing the recent dry winter spell that has significantly lowered the water table.

"We have sought answers from the government on whether it assesses and measures the environmental hazards caused by projects, be it roads, railways, or tunnels," he said.

Para continued, "We are inviting environmental troubles in the future. Therefore, we have sought an explanation from the environment minister regarding the environmental assessment of all ongoing projects in Jammu and Kashmir. These projects, carried out in the name of development, are causing large-scale destruction of our resources and environment."

"The point is, there should be a proper mechanism to assess the feasible footfall of pilgrims and tourists visiting Jammu and Kashmir to ensure that glaciers and the ecology are not eroded. The Yatra in Kashmir can only be sustained if there is water, ice, and glaciers," he explained.

The MLA further remarked, "As we can see, our brooks, wells, and streams have dried up. The Jhelum River is witnessing extensive sand mining. There is a mafia in Jammu and Kashmir that is extracting our resources. There should be an environmental assessment of everything happening in the name of development."—(KNO)

WEATHER

Doda, Kupwara, Pulwama, Rajouri, Shopian and Udhampur recorded excess rainfall, which varies from 20% to 59% above than the normal rainfall.

Reasi, Samba and Kathua stations however, recorded the deficit rainfall during the period, the data reads, adding that some of the stations including Ramban, Kishtwar and Bandipora have recorded large excess rainfall in the last five days.

Anantnag, Ganderbal, Jammu, Kulgam and Poonch have recorded normal precipitation

during the period.

The recent wet spell has recharged the water bodies in Kashmir.

As per the data, river Jhelum at Ram Munshi Bagh was flowing at 4.47 feet this evening, showing a rise in the water level.

The other streams too witnessed a rise in the water level following the recent back-to-back wet spell in Jammu and Kashmir.

Pertinently, the weatherman here has predicted another wet spell from March 10 in Jammu and Kashmir, saying that there is a possibility of light to moderate rain and snow (higher reaches) at many places on March 10 and 11, adding that the cloudy weather conditions are expected on march 12 while a spell of rain and snow is expected on March 13 and 14—(KNO)

DR JITENDRA

acknowledged that governance in the country underwent a fundamental shift from the midnight of August 15, 1947. He denounced the reincarnation of the British-era Indian Civil Services (ICS) into the IAS, emphasizing that the role of the District Collector has radically transformed. Previously focused on revenue collection, the modern District Collector now serves as the "District Development Commissioner (DDC)," leading development and being a key agent of change within their districts.

Although acknowledging the lingering remnants of colonial attitudes where civil servants once maintained a royal distance from the public, Dr. Singh noted a profound change. "Today, several districts across the country everyday witness protests in front of colleges, where citizens freely voice their concerns and grievances," he stated, underscoring the increased interaction between civil servants and the people they serve.

The Minister of State also lauded the growing inclusivity within the Civil Services, citing the increased representation of women in leadership roles and their consistent performance in securing top ranks across India's diverse regions. He expressed his pride in the continued rise of women in civil services, reflecting the success of India's commitment to gender equality and empowerment.

Dr. Jitendra Singh further stressed the importance of integrity, urging civil servants to embody honesty and ethical conduct in their daily professional lives. He remarked that increased accountability, transparency, and good governance are hallmarks of today's Civil Services in India.

One notable initiative Dr. Jitendra Singh highlighted was the three-month stint for IAS probationers in various ministries as Assistant Secretaries. This experience, he shared, provides IAS officers with valuable exposure to policymaking processes at the heart of governance, enriching their understanding of national policy and administration.

In closing, Dr. Jitendra Singh urged parents to rethink investments in costly coaching programs for their children aspiring to join the Civil Services. Drawing on his own experience, he emphasized that many successful candidates from diverse backgrounds—often from government schools like Navodaya Vidyalayas and Kendriya Vidyalayas—have succeeded without the need for expensive coaching.

ENG RASHEED

following which the court sought the National Investigation Agency's (NIAs) response on March 3.

Oberoi said the Delhi High Court had granted custody parole for two days enabling Rashid to attend the parliamentary sessions. Referring to Rashid's submission of questions on the functioning of J&K departments in Parliament, the lawyer said, "I have put in questions for all those departments. And I am therefore requesting debates on all those questions. I completely abide by the ruling of the high court (that its order of custody parole will not be treated as a precedent)...I am only trying to argue that in the face of the evidence, I am not a security threat." The NIA counsel opposed the submission and said being a parliamentarian, did not entitle a person exceptions from the effect of detention. "Today, he is a person who is an MP (seeking custody parole on grounds of fulfilling his duty). Tomorrow, a doctor may be saying that I am accused of an offence, but I need to conduct surgery to save the lives of people and that my patients are waiting? Can he conduct surgery?... So any person may say that I have to perform my duty, I have to discharge my function....,"

the NIAs counsel argued.

Sheikh Abdul Rashid, known as Engineer Rashid, defeated Chief Minister Omar Abdullah in the 2024 Lok Sabha polls in Baramulla. Rashid's regular bail application is currently pending before the court.

SAJAD LONE

He pointed out that 30 of those years were under NC-led governments, questioning why discussions on political detentions often ignored such cases—(KNO)

JJM

said, "As many as 38 water supply schemes were approved for the Beerwah constituency at an estimated cost of 113.19 crore."

He informed the House that 24 of these projects had been completed, with Rs 64.29 crore spent, while work was ongoing on 14 schemes.

However, Wani expressed dissatisfaction with the response, claiming the implementation had not met expectations.

Other legislators, including Congress MLA Nizamuddin Bhat, National Conference's Ali Mohammad Dar, AAP's Mehraj Malik, BJP's Baldev Raj, and Congress leader

G A Mir, raised additional questions, criticizing the handling of the mission.

They pointed out that several areas still lacked proper water supply despite project approvals.

Meanwhile, the Minister assured the House that an inquiry would be conducted into the alleged nexus between contractors and the department in a specific constituency. He also stated that officials responsible for incorrect responses would face action—(KNO)

KARRA

Home Minister. "The delegation led by the Chief Minister put this case before the Central government as this is the state which is in limbo with a denigrated status. We have not been alleviated to some status that we will take pride in," he said.

Bhat said that it the responsibility of the Chief Minister, the house and its members that if they sincere with their people, let's be quick on it and be assertive. "We already have a case and the Parliament has also promised us. Let there be either an All-Party delegation or a panel of the house to follow up this matter," he said—(KNO)

Waskhura Residents Protest Against Power, Water

Crisis; Authorities Assure

Restoration

■ DR.AB QAYOOM

Handwara, Mar,05: Residents of Waskhuan in north Kashmir's Handwara sub-district staged a protest on Tuesday, blocking the Handwara-Ramhal road near Talri Bridge for nearly ten minutes. The protesters, including men, women, and youth, expressed anger over the lack of basic facilities such as electricity and drinking water during the holy month of Ramadhan. According to the residents, their electricity supply was disconnected by the Power Development Department (PDD) a few days ago, leaving them in darkness during Sehri and Iftar. They also complained about a persistent water shortage, adding to their hardships. Soon after the road was blocked, Tehsildar Handwara Zeeshan Khan, along with officials from PDD, the Public Health Engineering (PHE) Department, and Handwara Police, reached the spot and assured the protesters that steps would be taken to restore power and water supply. Speaking to the media, Tehsildar Zeeshan Khan explained that 70% of the village's population had not paid their electricity bills, leading to the disconnection. "A huge amount is pending, which is why the PDD had to cut the power supply as per the directions of higher authorities. I urge the residents to clear their dues so they can use electricity without any restrictions," he stated. Regarding the water shortage, PHE officials said the extreme winter temperatures had damaged multiple pipelines, causing leakage and supply disruptions. "Our teams are working on repairing the damaged pipelines, and the water supply will be restored within a few days," said PHE Executive Engineer Bilal Ahmad. Following assurances from the civil and police administration, the protest concluded peacefully, and traffic movement on the Handwara-Ramhal road was restored.

GOVERNMENT OF UNION TERRITORY OF JAMMU AND KASHMIR OFFICE OF THE TEHSILDAR SALLAR

LEGAL HEIR CERTIFICATE

It is certified that Sh/Sat/Kumari SYED MUSTAFA SHAH, S/D/W/ SYED HYDER SHAH R HARDUKATHAL SOFIPORA Tehati SALLAR and District ANANTNAG of JAMMU AND 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	23	daughter	UNMARRIED
3	SYED SAFI HYDER	15	son	UNMARRIED
4	SYED SIBTAIN HYDER	7	son	UNMARRIED

TEHSILDAR SALLAR



Rs 18.73 crore walkway, jetties to enhance eco-tourism at Wular Lake: Govt

‘5 sq km of lake restored; no adverse impact on biodiversity from projects’

HT News Network

Srinagar, Mar 05: The Jammu and Kashmir government on Wednesday said it is taking major conservation and eco-tourism development initiative for Wular Lake with Rs 18.73 crore being spent on restoration efforts including dredging and walkway construction. In the next financial year, an additional Rs 22.09 crore has been allocated for new projects, including eco-tourism, cycling tracks and others, Minister in charge of Forest, Ecology, and Environment Department said in a written reply to queries by MLA Irshad Rasool Kar. The minister, according to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), said that the Wular Conservation and Management Authority (WUCMA) has been actively implementing a Comprehensive Management Action Plan (CMAP) since its establishment in 2012. He highlighted the completion of lake



boundary demarcation with the installation of 1,159 geo-referenced concrete pillars using GPS and remote sensing technology, while the total revenue area of Wular Lake stands at 130 sq km. He also mentioned the restoration of 5 sq km of critically silted lake area by dredg-

(Phase-I, 2.5 km) with cycling tracks, lookout points, and jetties at Banyari and S.K. Payeen, being executed by R&B at a cost of Rs 18.73 crore. Plans for Phase-II of the walkway, with a Rs 9.99 crore investment, are set for the next financial year and Cycling tracks from Watlab, Adipora, and Ninglee under DPR development, to be executed by R&B Sopore, the minister said, adding that eco-tourism parks at Banyari, Garoora, and Ninglee have been tendered for execution at a total cost of Rs 12.10 crore. Impact on aquatic life and corrective measures The minister clarified that all restoration and development works follow guidelines set by Wetlands International South Asia (WISA) under CMAP, ensuring no adverse effects on aquatic life or biodiversity. He said an impact study is being conducted by the National Institute of Hydrology, Roorkee, to scientifically assess major interventions and recommend corrective measures where necessary.

71 WSSs worth Rs 409.65 cr being implemented in PHE Division Chadoora: Javed Ahmad Rana

HT News Network

Jammu :Minister for Jal Shakti, Javed Ahmad Rana, informed that 71 WSS schemes of UT level, centrally sponsored and JJM schemes worth Rs 409.65 crore are being implemented in PHE division Chadoora, during the past two years. The Minister was replying to a question raised by MLA, Ali Mohammad Dar, in the Legislative Assembly here today. The Minister said that an amount of Rs. 218. 36 crore has been expended during the past two years on the schemes. The Minister also informed the house that the general public is being made aware about the flagship programme of JJM, its motives, objectives and benefits under the IEC activities. These are being done by way of installation of boards and banners at JJM schemes, Anganwadi centers, Government schools, the hoardings at prominent public places along roads, wall paintings at school compounds, Government establishments and other places, he added. He said that painting competitions in schools, rallies by school children were also being organized and an amount of Rs.106.49 lakh has been incurred on this account in the past two financial years under the IEC activities. He said that painting competitions in schools, rallies by school children were also being organized and an amount of Rs.106.49 lakh has been incurred on this account in the past two financial years under the IEC activities.

J&K’s mining revenue reaches Rs 39544 crore in 3-years: Govt ‘Over 5,000 vehicles seized for illegal mining’

HT News Network

Srinagar, Mar 05): The Jammu and Kashmir Government on Wednesday informed the Legislative Assembly that mining revenue has increased over the past three years. In a written reply to a query by MLA Dr S Bashir Ahmad Veeri, the government, according to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), provided a complete data of the past three years. “Revenue from mining activities stood at Rs 101.17 crore in 2022-23. It rose to Rs 175.47 crore in 2023-24. Up to January 2025, revenue collection for the current financial year has reached Rs 118.80 crore,” the reply stated. The government also reported an increase in penalties collected for mining violations. In 2022-23, fines amounting to 16.34 crore were imposed, which rose to 19.20 crore in 2023-24. Up to January 2025, Rs14.71 crore fine has already been collected. The reply further said that the author-



ities have intensified their crackdown on illegal mining, leading to the seizure of thousands of vehicles and machines. In 2022-23, 6,909 vehicles and machines were confiscated, which increased to 7,018 in 2023-24. So far, in 2024-25 (up to January), 5,053 seizures have been recorded, it added. The government denied allegations that illegal mining was going unchecked, asserting that strict measures have been taken to curb such activities—(KNO)

38th Regional Convocation of IGNOU held across the Country

HT News Network

Srinagar, March 05, 2025: The Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) celebrated its 38th Convocation in New Delhi, along with 39 Regional Centres across the country. The convocation was simultaneously held by IGNOU Regional Centre Srinagar at Tagore Hall for learners from the Kashmir and Ladakh regions. Shri Shantmanu, Additional Chief Secretary, Higher Education Department, Government of J&K, was the special guest, while Prof. (Dr.) Mohammad Mobin, Hon’ble Vice-Chancellor of Cluster University Srinagar, was the Guest of Honour. In his address, Shri Shantmanu stated that the distance between universities and learners has now been eliminated, highlighting the advantages of open and distance education. He also shared that he had received his Master’s degree in Public Administration from IGNOU in this convocation. Additionally, he awarded



degrees to a number of graduating students. Prof. Mohammad Mobin and Dr. A. H. Rizvi, Regional Director, presented degrees to the awardees present on the occasion. Dr. Rizvi emphasized the growing importance of distance and online education in the modern era and praised IGNOU’s role in providing quality educational services to students in remote, rural, and far-flung areas. The Regional Director informed that 11,792 learners from various academic programs were eligible to receive degrees at the convocation. Dr. Rizvi further announced that, for the convenience of students from remote areas, new examination centres have been set up at Government Degree Colleges in Kreeri, Langate, Uri, Handwara, Qazigund, Dooru, DH Pora, and Mattan.

During the function, certificates of Honour, Appreciation, and Excellence were also distributed. The event was attended by Deans, Heads, and faculty members from the Central University of Kashmir and the University of Kashmir, the Director of NIELIT, Principals, Coordinators, and staff from government colleges across Kashmir Valley. Various officers from the J&K Administration and Police Department, alumni, gold medalists from Kashmir, members of the media fraternity, and other distinguished guests were also present at the event. Prof. Mohammad Mobin and Dr. A. H. Rizvi, Regional Director, presented degrees to the awardees present on the occasion. Dr. Rizvi emphasized the growing importance of distance and online education in the modern era and praised IGNOU’s role in providing quality educational services to students in remote, rural, and far-flung areas. The Regional Director informed that 11,792 learners from various academic programs were eligible to receive degrees at the convocation.

Machil Roads Likely to Reopen Soon as Weather Improves: DC Kupwara

HT News Network

Kupwara, Mar, 05: The residents of Machil in north Kashmir’s Kupwara district continue to face severe hardships as heavy snowfall has left key roads blocked, cutting off access to essential supplies and services. The inner roads from Chotipora Payeen to Machil remain snowbound, adding to the distress of locals, especially during the ongoing holy month of Ramadhan. Authorities have cited avalanche threats as a primary reason for the delay in snow clearance operations, with the Border Roads Organisation (BRO) unable to proceed toward red-zone areas. However, Deputy Commissioner (DC) Kupwara has assured residents that efforts to reopen the roads will be expedited as weather conditions improve. “The administration is closely monitoring the situation, and we are hopeful that Machil and other blocked roads will soon be reopened for traffic,” said DC Kupwara. Meanwhile, residents are growing increasingly anxious due to the lack of essential supplies, including salt, fruits, and other daily necessities. Students appearing for examinations are also facing immense difficulties, with some struggling to reach their designated exam centers. “We are in Ramadhan, yet we are deprived of basic necessities due to snowbound roads. Our school-going children are also facing immense hardships. We appeal to the district administration to clear the inner link roads immediately so that we can move freely towards the local markets,” said a resident of Machil. Local authorities have assured that as soon as weather conditions permit, snow clearance efforts will be intensified to restore connectivity and provide much-needed relief to the affected communities.

MLA Hazratbal Salman Sagar Raises Key Public Issues in Assembly

HT News Network

Srinagar, Mar 5 (KNS): MLA Hazratbal, Salman Sagar, raised two significant public issues in the Assembly, focusing on healthcare accessibility and the long-pending payments of contractors under the Member of Parliament Local Area Development Scheme (MPLADS). Highlighting the need for improved ambulance services in Zakoora, Faqir Gujri, and Khimber, Salman Sagar questioned the government regarding the availability of these critical healthcare facilities. In response, the government assured that ambulances would soon be provided to Zakoora and Khimber under the Pradhan Mantri Jan Vikas Karyakram (PMJVK). Additionally, Faqir Gujri already has an ambulance, and an advanced Critical Care 4x4 ambulance is expected to be deployed in the area soon. To further enhance emergency healthcare, a Critical Care (108) ambulance is stationed at Darbagh Harwan to cater to the medical needs of the region. These developments aim to strengthen emergency medical response and improve healthcare accessibility for the local population. Addressing another pressing issue, Salman Sagar raised concerns over the pending payments of contractors under MPLADS. He questioned why a portion of the funds had been withheld despite partial payments being processed as per due procedure. Emphasizing the importance of fair and uniform application of codal formalities, he assured that the matter would be revisited during the cut motion to ensure justice for the affected contractors. Reaffirming his commitment to public welfare, MLA Hazratbal assured that he would continue to raise key issues affecting his constituency and work towards accountability and transparency in governance. (KNS)

Mirwaiz Umar Farooq Condemns BJP Member’s Remarks on 1931 Martyrs

HT News Network

Srinagar, March 5 (KNS): Mirwaiz Umar Farooq has strongly condemned the remarks made by a BJP member in the assembly regarding the martyrs of July 13, 1931. Taking to social media platform X, Mirwaiz expressed his outrage over the comments, asserting that any attempt to malign the memory of these martyrs would be firmly resisted. “Strongly condemn the outrageous remarks by a BJP member in assembly with regard to the martyrs of 13th July 1931, who were killed in cold blood for standing up for the rights and dignity of the oppressed people of Jammu and Kashmir. These martyrs revered by one and all in J&K, are part of our collective memory of the great sacrifices rendered by the people of Kashmir for their rights, and any attempt to malign them will be firmly resisted,” he posted on X. (KNS)

EDITORIAL

Failing to meet market challenges BSNL loses out in the race

Not long ago the Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL) was one of the major Navratnas of the country and this central public sector undertaking was earning huge profits. Following cut throat competition in the market the BSNL could not stand up to the modern day challenges and it used to toe the traditional line. There were people who used to identify themselves with the BSNL and it was due to this reason they persisted with the fixed phones of the Nigam.

With the passage of time most of the die-hard fans of BSNL also understood that the Navratna has lost its steam and has failed to pose a challenge to the other phone companies in the country. There is a huge chunk of population that believes that it was deliberate to undermine the credibility of the Nigam so that the other private phone companies make merry. It was due to this reason that sops were offered to these companies at the cost of causing loss to BSNL.

As the private phone companies spread a huge network of mobile telephony across the union territory of Jammu & Kashmir the BSNL was found wanting in this regard. The Nigam failed to set up an adequate number of mobile towers in the different districts of Jammu & Kashmir and as such it failed to rope in more and more consumers. On the other hand the private telecom companies reached every nook and corner and erected towers so as to provide world class connectivity to the mobile users.

There are many health resorts in Jammu & Kashmir where there is very little or virtually no connectivity of BSNL mobile phones with the mobile phones of the other companies having a very great speed. Despite issuance of directions from time to time the BSNL authorities have failed to upgrade the system and the same has turned out to be a win-win situation for the private mobile companies operating in the market.

The Nigam has also failed on yet another front and this is in the form of its inability to provide the fibre services to the people of Srinagar and other districts of Kashmir. The other mobile companies have been providing the fibre services to the people for years now while the BSNL is in its infancy in this respect. The Nigam these days is busy in the laying of fibre in limited areas of Srinagar with majority of the people being left out in this process.

Human Trafficking: Addressing obstacles and fostering a safer future

BASIT AMIN

Our society is constantly evolving, embracing new ideas, and adapting to changes. Over time, many social evils have been eradicated, while others persist—some visible and others hidden beneath the surface. One of the most egregious practices, Sati, was outlawed during the British era. Post-independence, India has taken significant strides in reforming its society and addressing prevalent injustices. The Constitution abolished untouchability, and Article 23 explicitly prohibits human trafficking in any form. Despite these legal safeguards, several social evils continue to exist, leaving countless individuals to suffer in silence, often without recourse to law enforcement or justice.

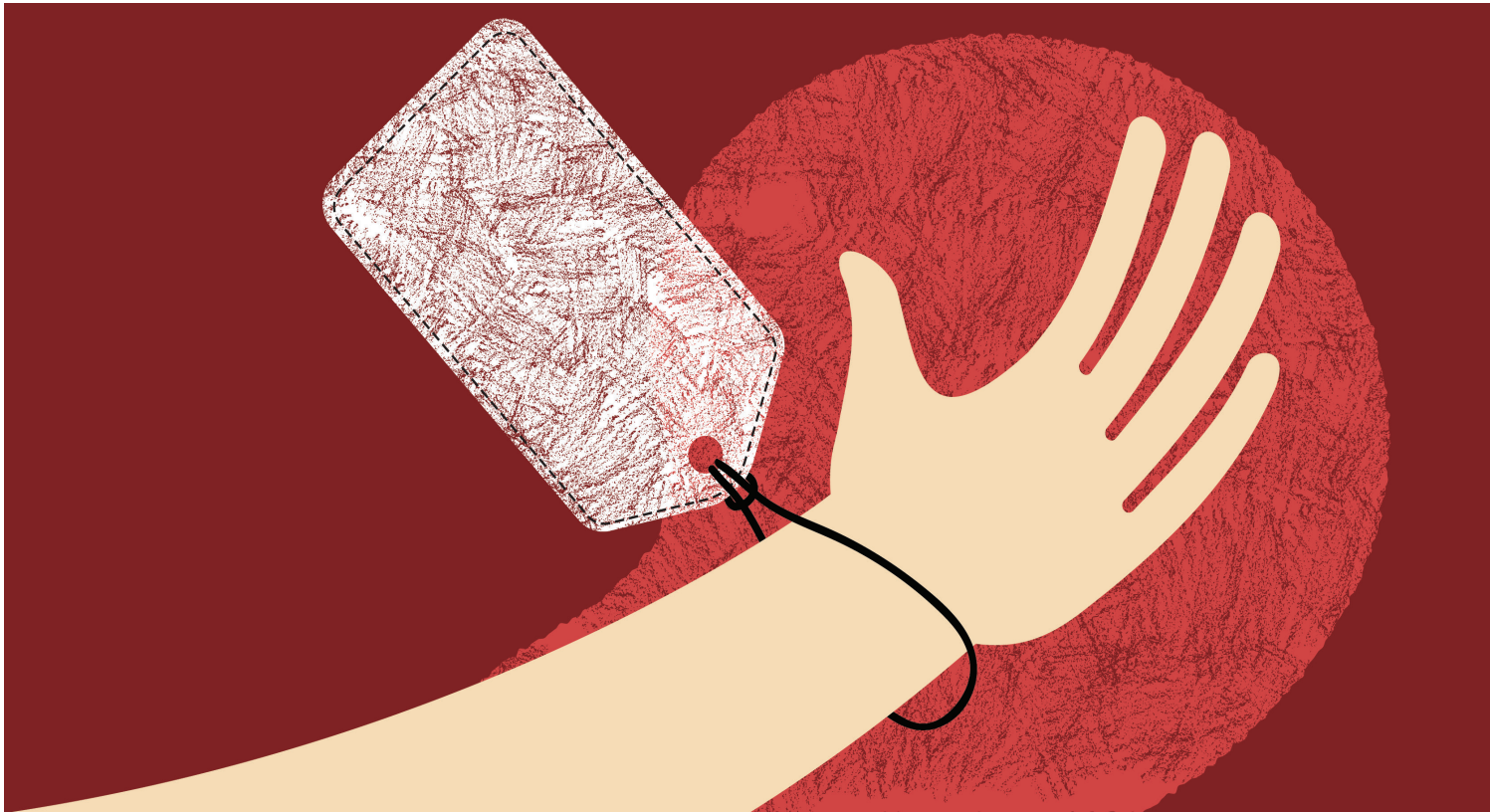
One of the prevailing evils is human trafficking. In this article, we will explore how it operates and the factors that drive it.

The United Nations defines human trafficking as the recruitment, transport, transfer, harbouring, or receipt of persons through various means such as force, coercion, fraud, or deception for the purpose of exploitation. In the words of Tim Ballard, “The greatest crime in the world is human trafficking. The act of trafficking and selling human beings is the most heinous thing.”

Trafficking in human beings is one of the largest organized crimes in the world. A victim of human trafficking is a victim of continuous and multiple crimes at all stages of trafficking. Victims of trafficking may be of any age or gender. They suffer physically, psychologically, and economically, leading to immense physical and mental trauma. The perpetrators of this crime are usually organized crime networks operating locally, regionally, or internationally.

Among all social evils, human trafficking is one of the most widespread yet least noticeable. It exists everywhere but remains hidden. Before we delve deeper, let's familiarize ourselves with some related information.

Status of Trafficking in India



According to the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB), more than 10,000 trafficking cases were reported from 2018 to 2022.

- In 2022, 2,189 cases were reported, involving 6,533 victims, of whom 2,877 were minors. The majority of these cases pertained to forced labour and sexual exploitation.

- In Delhi, human trafficking cases increased by 73.5% in 2021 compared to the previous year, with many victims forced into labour and exploitation.

- Sex trafficking is one of the most prevalent forms of human trafficking.

- Human trafficking is the third-largest source of profit for organized crime after arms and drug trafficking.

The Situation in Jammu and Kashmir

Human trafficking in Jammu and Kashmir has seen a concerning rise in recent years. According to the National Commission for Women (NCW), there was a 15.56% increase in trafficking cases in the region as of mid-2023.

A significant issue in the region is the trafficking of women and girls under the guise of marriage. Many are sold as brides, often leading to exploitation and abuse.

Forms of Trafficking
Trafficking can take several forms, including:

- Bonded labour
- Forced labour
- Child labour

- Sexual exploitation in massage parlours

- Prostitution

- Sexual exploitation for pornography

- Trafficking for child marriages

- Organ trafficking

However, some forms of trafficking are less visible. These fall under informal trafficking, where victims may not even be aware that they are being trafficked.

Informal Trafficking

Informal trafficking occurs when individuals are unaware of their victimization. For example:

1. A person may be recruited by a company under the pretense of employment, only to be transported to an unfamiliar location and sold on a contractual basis for menial tasks such as cleaning. The company retains most of the payment while giving the worker a fraction as wages—often delayed. This creates an illusion of employment but is, in reality, a form of trafficking.

2. Some trafficking networks exploit minors, forcing them into begging and generating income for criminal syndicates.

In such cases, both government and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) play an essential role in identifying and addressing these injustices. Public awareness and opinion formation are crucial in combating this issue.

Reasons for Human Trafficking

Human trafficking does not occur in a vacuum; multiple factors contribute to its prevalence. The most prominent factors include:

- Poverty - Rural areas with high poverty rates are easy targets, as traffickers lure individuals with false promises of employment.

- Lack of education and awareness - Illiteracy and ignorance increase vulnerability to deception.

- Economic inequality - The poor are often exploited with false job opportunities.

- Patriarchal society - Women and girls are disproportionately victimized due to gender-based violence.

- Migration - People seeking employment in unfamiliar places, especially those without proper documentation, are at high risk.

- Weak law enforcement

- Trafficking persists due to poor implementation of laws and lack of judicial intervention.

Government Measures to Curb Trafficking

Despite the rise in trafficking cases, the Indian government has taken several steps to combat it:

- Ratification of the United Nations Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime (UNTOC)

- Signing an MoU with Bangladesh to combat trafficking

- Anti-Trafficking Unit

under the Ministry of Home Affairs

- Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) addresses trafficking

What Needs to Be Done

Governments, NGOs, and civil society have a moral obligation to fight this inhumane crime. It is imperative that we overcome societal conservatism and work toward a future where all individuals, especially children and women, can lead dignified lives.

Legal Framework in India

1. Article 23 of the Constitution - Prohibits human trafficking.

2. The Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act, 1956

3. The Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act, 1976

4. The Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989

5. The Transplantation of Human Organs Act, 1994

6. The Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006

7. The Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, 2012

8. The Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015

9. The Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act, 2016

Proposed Measures

1. Passage of the Trafficking of Persons (Prevention, Protection, and Rehabilitation) Bill

2. Establishment of an

Organized Crime Investigation Authority (OCIA)

3. Strict enforcement of Articles 23 and 24 of the Constitution

4. Nationwide awareness programs to educate citizens about trafficking

5. Strict punishment for non-compliance with anti-trafficking laws

6. NGO and civil society engagement to raise awareness at the grassroots level

7. Fast-track courts for quicker resolution of trafficking cases

8. Special judicial benches to handle trafficking cases efficiently

9. Welfare programs to improve employment opportunities for vulnerable populations

10. Use of technology, such as mobile apps, to report trafficking incidents

11. Increased support for trafficking survivors through rehabilitation and reintegration programs

12. Empowering the National Human Rights Commission to take stricter action against trafficking networks

Conclusion

Human trafficking is a grave violation of human rights, and its eradication requires collective efforts from individuals, society, and governments. Justice must prevail, and those who are most vulnerable to exploitation should be treated with dignity.

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The Lost ‘Arab’: Gaza And The Evolving Language Of The Palestinian Struggle

RAMZY BAROUD

Language matters. Aside from its immediate impact on our perception of great political events, including war, language also defines our understanding of these events throughout history, thereby shaping our relationship with the past, the present, and the future. As Arab leaders are mobilizing to prevent any attempt to displace the Palestinian population of war-stricken Gaza - and the occupied West Bank for that matter - I couldn't help but reflect on language: when did we stop referencing the 'Arab-Israeli conflict,' and substitute that with the 'Palestinian-Israeli conflict'?

Aside from the obvious problem that military occupations should not be described as 'conflicts' - a neutral term that creates a moral equivalence - the

removal of 'Arabs' from the 'conflict' has greatly worsened matters, not only for Palestinians, but Arabs themselves.

Before we talk about these repercussions, that of swapping words and altering phrases, it is important to dig deeper: when exactly was the term 'Arab' removed? And equally important, why was it added in the first place?

The League of Arab States was established in March 1945, over three years before the establishment of Israel. A main cause of that newly found Arab unity was Palestine, then under British colonial 'mandate.' Not only did the few independent Arab states understand the centrality of Palestine to their collective security and political identities, but they perceived Palestine as the single most critical issue for all Arab nations - indepen-

dent or otherwise.

That affinity grew stronger with time, and the Arab League summits always reflected the fact that Arab peoples and governments, despite conflicts, rebellions, upheavals, and divisions, were always united in a singular value: the liberation of Palestine.

The spiritual significance of Palestine grew hand in hand with its political and strategic significance to the Arabs, thus the injection of the religious component to that relationship.

The arson attack on the Al-Aqsa Mosque in August 1969 was the main catalyst behind the establishment of the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC) later that year. In 2011, it was renamed the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, though Palestine remained the central topic of Muslim dialogue.

Still, the 'conflict' remained 'Arab,' as Arab countries were the ones who bore the brunt of it, engaged in its wars, suffered its defeats, but also shared its moments of triumph.

The Arab military defeat in June 1967 to the Israeli army, backed by the United States and other powerful western powers, was a watershed moment. Humiliated and angry, Arab nations declared their famous "Three No's" at the Khartoum Summit in August-September of that same year. All the 'no's' centered on the idea that there will be no peace, negotiations, or recognition of Israel while Palestinians are held captive.

That strong stance, however, didn't survive the test of time. Disunity among Arab nations rose to the surface, and such terms as Al-'Am al-Qawmi al-'Arabi - the Arab national security

- often focused on Palestine, splintered into new conceptions surrounding the interests of nation-states.

The Camp David Accords signed between Egypt and Israel in 1979 deepened Arab divisions - and marginalized Palestine further - though, in actuality, it didn't invent them.

It was around these times that western media, then academia, began coining new terms regarding Palestine. The 'Arab' was dropped, in favor of 'Palestinian'. That simple change was earth-shattering, as Arabs, Palestinians, and people around the world began making new associations with the political discourse pertaining to Palestine. The isolation of Palestine had thus crossed that of physical sieges and military occupation, into the realm of language.

Palestinians fought hard

to win their rightful and deserved position as the guardians of their own struggle. Though the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) was established at the behest of Egypt in the First Arab Summit in Cairo of 1964, Palestinians, under the leadership of Fatah's Yasser Arafat, were given the helm in 1969.

Five years later, in the Arab Summit in Rabat (1974), the PLO was collectively perceived as the "sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people," later to be granted observer status at the United Nations.

Ideally, a truly independent Palestinian leadership needed to be embraced by a collective and unified Arab position, aiding it in the difficult, and often bloody, process of liberation. Events that followed, however, attested to a far less ideal trajectory: Arab and Palestin-

ian divisions weakened the position of both, splintering their energies, resources, and political decisions.

But history is not destined to follow the same pattern. Though historical experiences may appear to replicate themselves, the wheel of history can be channeled to move in the right direction.

Gaza, and the great injustice resulting from the destruction of the Israeli war in the Strip, is once more being a catalyst for Arab dialogue, and, if there is enough will, unity.

Though Palestinians have demonstrated that their sumud - steadfastness - is enough to repel all stratagems aimed at their very destruction, Arab nations must reclaim their position as the first line of solidarity and support for the Palestinian people, not only for the sake of Palestine itself but

also for the sake of all Arab nations.

Unity is now key to recentering the just cause of Palestine, so that language may, once more, shift, injecting the 'Arab' component as a critical word in a struggle for freedom that should concern all Arab and Muslim nations, and in fact, the whole world.

- Dr. Ramzy Baroud is a journalist, author and the Editor of The Palestine Chronicle. He is the author of six books. His latest book, co-edited with Ilan Pappé, is 'Our Vision for Liberation: Engaged Palestinian Leaders and Intellectuals Speak Out'. His other books include 'My Father was a Freedom Fighter' and 'The Last Earth'. Baroud is a Non-resident Senior Research Fellow at the Center for Islam and Global Affairs (CIGA). His website is www.ramzybaroud.net

Ramadan ul Mubarak



SAHIL MANZOOR

Alhumdulillah! Allah (SWT) blessed us with one more chance with the holy month of Ramadan. This month has immense and great importance in Islam. This year the holy month starts from the 2nd of March. 2025 and 1446 Hijri calendar.

The month is utterly blessed; people start fasting from Fajr to Maghrib.

Ramzan ul Mubarak is the ninth month of the Islamic calendar. Since today, most of the counties across the globe are observing fasting from dawn to sunset. The month has immense importance among Muslims around the world. During this month, the Muslims are supposed to do charity among the needy and poor, distributing essential home commodities like rice packages, oil, etc. arranges Iftar parties in the mosques and distributes dates of different standard varieties to the people who are fasting and earning good deeds for the world hereafter. Ramzan ul Mubarak is the fourth pillar of Islam. There are five "pillar" Islamic areas. 1) Kalma (faith, shahada) 2) Namaz (five prayers; it includes Fajr, Zuhri, Asar, Magrib, and Asha); 3) zakat (charity). 4. Roza, or sawm in Arabic (fasting), and the fifth one is hajj (pilgrimage).

The fasts of the Razman ul Mubarak are mandatory and obligatory on every Muslim except the children below the age group of 7 years, lactating mothers, those who are dependent on medicines, those who are traveling long distances, older and weaker persons, etc. The month is full of blessings, strengthening our eternal spirituality. During this pious month, most Muslims spend most of their time with the recitation of the Quran and offer prayers in addition to the mandatory prayers. Seminars are being held during the month, where scholars enlighten the audience on the importance of fasting, charity, etc. Every day of this month has great importance in the history of Islam. During this month, towering and fanatical followers of Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, got martyrdom.

One who spent one single

rupee during this month may get the reward of seventy rupees, and there are immense rewards hereafter in this artificial world. We Muslims have faith, and we believe that after death there is a long and lasting life, and almighty Allah bestows upon us rewards we had never thought of. The month gives a clear message to the world: humanity helps each other through tough times. Feel the hunger of the starving people. He feels the pain of people who have nothing to eat, nothing to wear, and no shelter and teaches us about brotherhood and gives the message, "Share what you have, whether it's food, money, clothes, etc." No one should die without food, and we have to live for each other. May Allah give us the highest rewards here and hereafter in this artificial world.

We are all humans; we all feel pain; we all have emotions and sentiments; everyone has his or her own emotions; we have to live for each other; we have to support each other in their difficult circumstances; we have to support our needy brothers and sisters, etc. This Ramzan, in sha Allah, we will change our thoughts, which we are keeping against others. Let's forgive everyone. May Allah forgive your past and present sins that we have committed intentionally or unintentionally. We have to be very thankful to the Almighty that we have got a chance again to forgive our sins in front of Him; we have one more chance to pray for our beloved ones and make all those happy who support us, feed us, bear for us, and make everyone joyful so that the evils in our society and in our minds should be erased forever. The month has been full of unlimited blessings, and every one of us should follow the message of this month. It is our responsibility to eradicate all the evils in our society. It is our duty to save our brothers, sisters, and friends who are involved in drug addiction and involved in others' evil that their beloved ones are so concerned for them. We have to keep ourselves engaged in social works throughout the year, and it is our duty to make our kin proud and keep our society happy in various legitimate ways. Keeping others happy gives you immense relief and keeps your worries away in this and that way. Happy Ramzan ul Mubarak.

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The Peril and Jeopardy of Public Debates: When Religious Debates Breed Division In lieu of Unity

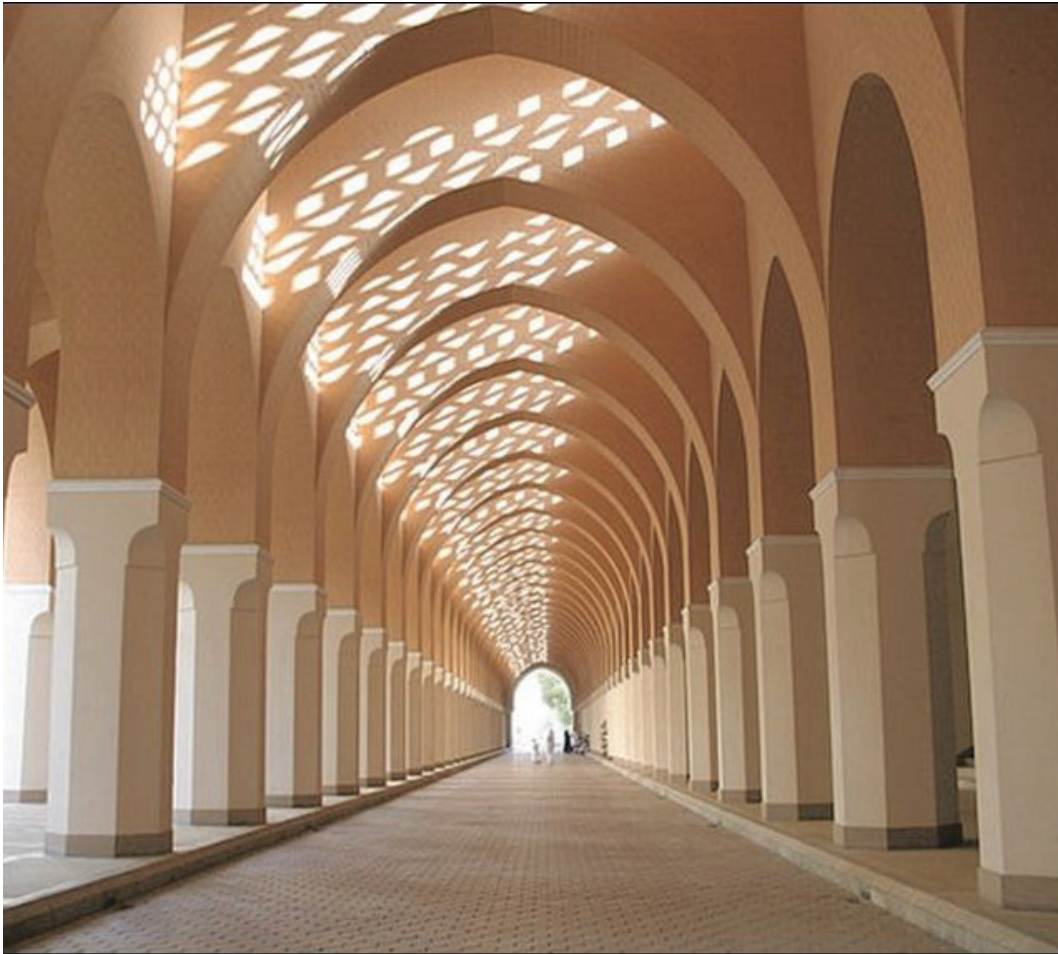


NAWAZZ IBN AHAD

In an age henpecked by digital interactions, social media has become the novel equivalent of a public square. ineptly, rather than being a space for respectful dialogue, it has become a stage for ideological battles. Many scholars and preachers, rather than practicing their knowledge to guide the Ummah toward righteousness, engage in ardent ,fervent and fiery swap and exchange that often descend into personal attacks. Instead of focusing on commonalities, public debates frequently highlight differences, fostering a culture of sectarianism.

In recent times, this principle has been overshadowed by a growing trend, the public and often hostile debates about Islam on social media and in open forums. Instead of serving as a medium for enlightenment and guidance, these platforms have transformed into battlegrounds of sectarianism, personal ego, and antagonism .Rather than spreading the message of concord, scholars and self-proclaimed preachers frequently engage in theological arguments, using the internet to attack one another, discredit opposing views, and deepen sectarian divides. This misuse of knowledge not only misguides the masses but also damages the very fabric of Islamic brotherhood.Whether it is disputes between Sunni and Shia, Salafi and Sufi, or debates on jurisprudential differences, these arguments have turned into public spectacles where religious leaders are more concerned with "winning" than with guiding people toward truth.

Instead of upholding the dignity of Islamic scholarship, many clerics exploit online platforms to launch verbal attacks against one another, ridiculing opposing viewpoints while seeking to validate their own opinions. This not only distorts the essence of Islam but also tarnishes the noble legacy of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and his sacred household, whose message was one of humility, wisdom, and inclusivity.Some preachers, driven by personal ambition, exploit public debates to gain followers



and popularity. Many use social media to boost their personal brand, engaging in controversy simply to increase views, likes, and followers. This is a dangerous trend because it transforms sincere religious scholarship into a means of self-promotion. Islamic knowledge requires sincerity, discipline, and deep reflection. Social media, which thrives on quick interactions, emotional reactions, and attention-seeking behavior, is not a suitable platform for religious discourse.

In the sphere of Islamic learning, knowledge is meant to illuminate, guiding humanity toward truth, unity, and compassion. Yet, in modern times, this very wisdom has become a heavy load, as scholars, or moulvis, engage in endless disputes that breed division rather than harmony. The rise of social media has intensified this troubling trend, turning platforms meant for connection into arenas of sectarianism, ego, and hostility. Instead of spreading messages of love and unity, many moulvis have become embroiled in public clashes, pointing fingers and prioritizing personal validation over the collective well-being of the Ummah. This trend is deeply troubling, as it shifts the focus from sincere guidance to the pursuit of fame. Instead of spreading the message of Islam with humility, some individuals turn debates into performances, aiming to outshine their opponents rather than to bring people closer to Allah.

Recent debates over the drying up of heritage springs, such as Achabal, highlight this concerning shift. Rather than addressing the environmental crisis with wisdom and constructive dialogue, scholars resorted to blame, targeting ancestors and rival sects. These disputes, devoid of Quranic and Hadith-based reasoning, have descended into sectarian quarrels, with moulvis waving ideological pamphlets instead of the sacred texts that should guide their discourse. Such behavior not only damages the reputation of Islamic scholarship but also undermines the essence of Islam—a faith built on unity, compassion, and the pursuit of truth.

A viral video that recently spread across social media captured this troubling reality. In it, moulvis were seen hurling accusations at one another, clutching sectarian literature instead of the Quran. This spectacle, far from being an intellectual exchange, resembled a marketplace of egos, where the sacred duty of conveying Allah's message was overshadowed by the desire to prove oneself right. The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) warned against such behavior, stressing that debates should be conducted with humility and the intention of seeking truth, not personal victory. Sadly, many modern scholars seem to have forgotten this teaching, choosing instead to engage in public displays of division and animosity.

The consequences of such disputes are far-reaching. When

scholars prioritize sectarian loyalty over the universal principles of Islam, they risk alienating those they are meant to guide. The Ummah, already facing numerous challenges, cannot afford further fragmentation. Islam spread through the sacrifices of the Prophet (PBUH)—through the wounds he endured in Taif and the teeth he lost in Uhud. Yet, today, many moulvis and speakers seem more focused on enhancing their own reputations than honoring the sacrifices of Allah's Messenger. This shift from selflessness to self-promotion is a betrayal of the Prophet's legacy and a disservice to the Ummah.

The esteemed Sufi saint Baayazid Bustami once said, "The true scholar is one who sees the light of truth and follows it, not one who clings to his own opinions." His words serve as a powerful reminder that knowledge is not a tool for personal gain but a means of drawing closer to Allah and serving humanity. Similarly, the Prophet (PBUH) taught that debates conducted in public spaces, especially those that incite hatred or division, have no place in Islam. True discourse should be rooted in humility, respect, and the desire to uplift others, not to tear them down.

The outcomes of such divisive debates are clear: they erode trust in religious leaders, deepen sectarian divides, and create an environment of hostility. When moulvis engage in public disputes, they risk reducing Islam to a series of ideological battles, stripping it of its spiritual and

unifying essence. This not only confuses the masses but also drives people away from the faith, as they struggle to reconcile the message of love and unity with the behavior of those who claim to represent it.

To reverse this trend, scholars must return to the core principles of Islam. They must remember that their duty is not to prove themselves right but to guide others toward truth. Debates, when necessary, should be conducted with humility, respect, and a focus on Quranic and Hadith-based teachings. Social media, instead of being a platform for division, should be used to spread messages of love, unity, and constructive dialogue.

In conclusion, the burden of knowledge lies not in its acquisition but in its misuse. When scholars prioritize ego over enlightenment, they betray the very essence of their calling. Let us remember the sacrifices of the Prophet (PBUH), the wisdom of Baayazid Bustami, and the teachings of Islam that call us to unity and compassion. Only by returning to these principles can we hope to heal the divisions within the Ummah and fulfill our duty as bearers of Allah's message. The path forward is clear: replace animosity with love, division with unity, and ego with humility. Only then can the knowledge of scholars become a true source of light for the Ummah.

The burden of knowledge is not in its acquisition but in its misuse. When scholars and preachers prioritize ego, sectarian loyalty, and public validation over sincerity, they harm the very religion they claim to represent. Islam does not encourage arguments for the sake of arguments but promotes wisdom, patience, and unity. The misuse of knowledge through public debates and social media disputes is a dangerous trend that threatens the unity and sanctity of the Ummah. Rather than engaging in divisive arguments, Muslims should strive to uphold the dignity of religious discourse by adhering to the teachings of the Quran and the prophetic tradition.

In an era where social media dominates conversations, it is crucial to remember that Islam is not a religion of dispute but of wisdom. Engaging in debates fueled by arrogance and hatred does nothing but tarnish the image of Islam and weaken the fabric of the Ummah.

Let us replace hostility with kindness, division with unity, and argumentation with understanding. A true scholar is not the one who wins debates, but the one who wins hearts.

SHEIKH SHABIR KULGAMI

Violence against women and girls is an outright human rights violation, and the immediate and long-term physical, sexual, and mental consequences for women and girls can be devastating, death included. Atrocities – physical and mental – are committed on impunity against women here; daughters -in-law, the soft targets and silent victims in particular. According to the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) data, 3,900 cases [of crime against women] were registered in 2021, 3,800 in 2022, and around 4,100 in 2023 (in Jammu and Kashmir). Nothing can change if we change nothing. It is high time, we join hands and not only arrest the routine of violence against our daughters -in-law but reverse this runaway criminal offence.

As (this) society has become more accepting towards domestic violence against daughters-in-law or their husbands or both in most cases, 95% older adults feel comfortable living separately or with one son and his wife as an option. Brittle financial stability and craving for independence are key factors in this development. Many older adults are financially independent – due to their service pension or salary or agricultural income – and no longer feel the need to stay in a joint family consisting of daughters -in-law . And once sons leave the joint family with their wives, their parents do not see a pressing need to persuade the young couples to return for living together, especially, if they have different or clashing interests .

Instead, a troubling routine is on the rise among the bride's in-laws: they hatch

plots to split the young couple by withholding their property share for decades together or denying it altogether. Also, the young couple is thrown out of the house or some shelter is provided only after a horrible fight. The in-laws manufacture big lies to mislead the neighbors – only to justify the verbal / physical abuse of the bride and her husband (the son in fact) apart from depriving the couple of a roof over its head and of the constitutional right to live with dignity and comfort.

The young mother, as mentioned earlier, confronted the same agony. Her husband's middle aged parents are living neither with him nor with their other married son. Thus three families are living under a single roof. What happened on the fateful day – the two brothers had a heated argument over something. Their parents dangerously sided

with the younger son and his wife and thrashed this daughter- in- law (the young mother) and this son (her husband) on spot.

The fight saw the parents throwing the couple's each item of use out of the single-room house and locking the door behind. Thus this helpless young couple and their children lost shelter and face within minutes in this chilling winter.

This trend can be attributed to a variety of factors: lax implementation of the rule of law criminalizing cruelty against a daughter-in-law; providing housing rights to all citizens and providing right to property to every individual. Public silence and indifference exacerbate the situation. This leaves thousands of sons and their wives languishing in distress, depression and helplessness.

Truth is that domestic violence is widely prevalent in

this UT but largely remains invisible in public domain. A woman is subjected to cruelty by her husband or his relatives. It happens in a number of ways: beating, hanging her, poisoning her, burning her, making her commit a suicide, verbal abuse, overworking her, neglecting her health and throwing her out of home for petty reasons. Main reasons remain overt or covert demand for dowry, a wife's opposition to the disloyalty by her husband and bad looks of a woman. Or by simply exercising her freedom of speech.

A daughter-in-law is supposed to simply receive orders at her matrimonial home. Her mannerisms, habits, values, beliefs and attitude are not accepted. That results in a clash. She is expected to do as she is directed by her in-laws. Every one – her sisters-in-law, brothers-in-law, father-in-law and mother-in-

-law- begin to order her to make her do every piece of work from washing to making bed. Her likes and dislikes and sentiments are ignored. She cannot resist. She has to follow their orders. And if she does not, she is punished verbally as well as physically and is forced to return to her parental home or live in a rented house. And in most cases, a woman tolerates this ordeal; the property share is denied.

From the statistics, the volume of the crime can be known, but it is very hard to know the impact of damage done to a woman's personality and psyche. In our society, a woman is socialized for generations into acceptance of suffering and also not enough empowered to stand on her own feet and raise her voice. So she silently suffers behind doors. What hurts more is that she does not leave her matrimonial home, fearing

bad effects of her action on her children, her parental family. So she silently goes on tolerating the torment and ill-treatment at her matrimonial home. What an irony, in her parents' home, she is someone else's property and in her matrimonial home, she is an outsider. And she only has to behave as per the wishes of her in-laws.

Legal grounds for this barbaric and inhuman treatment are claims of ownership of property by the in-laws, zero conviction rate of the in-laws and wider social sanction. The non-reporting of these crimes to police/court is the main reason why the cruelty rate by in-laws in JK UT is so high. But it is hoped that cases shall be filed with police as to the ill-treatment of a daughter-in-law by her husband's parental family (her in-laws). Let's support this noblest act to prevent injustice.

Sheikhshabir518@gmail.com

Several WSSs completed, others under progress in SMVD constituency Concerted efforts underway to address water scarcity caused by rainfall deficiency: Javed Rana

■ HT News Network

JAMMU, MARCH 4: Minister for Jal Shakti, Javed Ahmad Rana, today said that 35 WSSs have been either completed or under progress in different areas of Shri Mata Vaishno Devi (SMVD) constituency to facilitate portable water facility to the people.

The Minister was replying to a question raised by MLA, Baldev Raj Sharma, in the Legislative Assembly. He added that 91 PANI SAMITI Committees have been constituted in SMVD Constituency under IJM, comprising elected members of the Panchayat Raj Institutions, community leaders, school teachers, Anganwadi workers, ASHA workers and others and it has to have at least 50 percent representation of women. He said that there is no slacken-

ing in monitoring by the Pani Samitis and there are regular reviews being held by District Jal Jeevan Missions (DJJMs) headed by the respective District Development Commissioners.

The Minister said that the rainfall recorded about 79% deficiency, as per data by the ending February this year, resulting in depletion of most of the Spring sources. He said that some important measures being taken up to tackle scarcity of water in SMVD constituency included awareness among the general public about judicious use of water and avoiding wastages. Besides, channelization of local nallahs has also been proposed at some sources by diverting the flow to recharge the springs.

He said that several measures like protection and development of the sources, deployment of additional



water and focus on water conservation, rain water harvesting, ground water recharge, rejuvenation of traditional bodies and afforestation are being taken up to address the issue. He also informed that the present status of drinking water demand

and supply in the SMVD Constituency (rural areas) is 11.85 lakh gallons per day against the water availability of 10.49 lakh gallons per day.

The Minister said that all the pipes including GI, DI and HDPE are being used as per the site require-

ment and their suitability. He said that the HDPE pipes are one among the non-metallic pipes recommended by the CPHEEO manual and advised by NJJM, for use in transmission of water under various WSSs. He said that the concerned technical field staff monitors the work on a regular basis at the site. Apart from the District Project Management Units (DPMUs), there is a Third Party Inspection Agency for monitoring the quality of works, he added.

Replying to a supplementary, the Minister said that a strict inquiry would be conducted in case of failure of Pani Samitis, fixing the responsibilities accordingly. Besides, focus shall be given on fixing loopholes, if any, in execution of IJM works. The Minister said that the rainfall record- about 79% deficiency, as per data by the ending February this year, resulting in depletion of most of the

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DC Kulgam reviews functioning of CSCs, directs officers to monitor their functioning

■ Farooq Rather

KULGAM, MARCH 05: To review the functioning of Common Service Centres (CSCs) and examine their operations for smooth delivery of essential public services to the local population, Deputy Commissioner (DC) Kulgam, Athar Aamir Khan, today chaired a meeting, here.

At the outset, District Manager CSCs provided an overview of the CSC operations and the services offered.

It was informed that there are 528 sanctioned CSCs in the district, out of which 378 are active, with at least one CSC available in each Gram Panchayat. Additionally, 13 CSC touch points have been established in government offices across the district.

DC directed the Coordinator CSC Kulgam to open more CSCs in the remote areas of the district.

He emphasized on making all the touch points functional at the earliest and discontinue the CSCs which are non functional for a long time.

He highlighted the importance of resuming all CSC operations to facilitate public registration for welfare schemes like PM-KISSAN, PMAY-G,



PMSYM, PMJDY, and Ayushman Bharat, as well as for obtaining domicile certificates.

Athar cautioned against overcharging and delays in service delivery to prevent any repercussions.

DC directed the officers to identify the space in their respective offices within days for making all the touch points functional.

Tehsildars and BDOs were directed to monitor the functioning and services provided by the CSCs to common masses in their respective jurisdictions.

The meeting was attended by AD-DC, ACD, ACR, All Tehsildars, BDOs, ARTO and the District Manager CSC Kulgam, along with the Village Level Entrepreneurs.

Subject: Grant of registration of the paying Guest house/Home stay under the name and style " Saina Palace Paying Guest House/Home Stay" Situated at Khayam Chowk Srinagar.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Whereas, I Mohammad Yousuf Wichka S/o: Ali Mohammad Wichka, R/o: N9 68B Budshah Nagar Natipora Srinagar, intends to apply in the office of Prescribed Authority of Directorate of Tourism Kashmir for registration of my proposed Paying Guest House/Home Stay under the Name & Style "Saina palace Paying Guest House/Home Stay" Situated at near Khayam Chowk Srinagar, under Tourist trade Act 1978/82/2011-12. Whereas I will submit Landownership Certificate from Concerned Tehsildar with latest photographs of the unit through Dy. Commissioner Concerned, Rent/Lease Deed/Partnership Deed/Issued by concerned Sub-Registrar, Judicial Magistrate (if applicable NOC from the owner to the effect that the property can be used as HomeStay), Character Certificate of the applicant from the Concerned Police Station, undertaking from the owner as self declaration, Public Notice inviting objections, if any in print media, list of family members Name, Age and Photograph self attested by owner, photographs of the unit as mentioned in the application (each of exterior and individual bedrooms and bathrooms), inspection report by the Committee shall decide whether to issue a registration to the unit or not keeping in view, the type of accommodation and amenity, Aadhar card. Now before my case is processed for registration by the prescribed Authority. The matter is hereby notified for information of General Public/Organizations for objections if any and the same should reach to the office of prescribed Authority within a period of 7 days from the publication of this notice in leading local newspaper of the valley. Objections received beyond the period of 7 days from the date of publication shall not be entertained and the case shall be processed under rules as per merit.

Subject: Grant of registration of the proposed travel unit under the name and style " Kashmir prime time Tour & Travel." Situated at Lashkare Mohalla Ishber Nishat Srinagar

PUBLIC NOTICE

Where I Javeed Ahmad Bhat S/o: Manzoor Hussain Bhat R/o: Bhat Mohallah Dal lake Srinagar, intends to apply in the Department of Tourism for registration of my proposed travel unit under Name and style "Kashmir prime time Tour & Travel." Situated at Lashkare Mohalla Ishber Nishat Srinagar under Tourist trade Act 1978/82/2011-12.

Whereas I will submit State Subject/Domicile Certificate, Qualification Certificate, Pan Card, Experience Certificate (Minimum of 5 years), Character Certificate (Police Department), Bank Statement (Minimum Balance 10,000), Site plan, Affidavit, Rent deed duly attested by Sub-Registrar, Printing Material (letter Head/visiting Card), photographs of the unit (Indoor and Outdoor) and Two passport size photograph to the Department of Tourism as per prescribed checklist prior to Registration of my unit as an Excursion Agency.

Now as per J&K Registration of Tourism Trade Act 1978/82/2011-12, before my case is processed for registration by the competent Authority the matter is hereby notified for information of the General public/Financial Institutions Bank/ Organization, etc for objection, if any and the same should reach to the Deputy Director Tourism Registration (email id: ddtreg123@gmail.com) within a period of 7 days from the publication of this Notice in leading local newspaper of the valley. No objection beyond a period of 7 days shall be entertained.

اطلاع عام

ہر خاص عام کو اطلاع دی جاتی ہے کہ بینک اکاؤنٹ زیر نمبر 0122040100014379 میرا نام جانے بیگم ادراج ہوا ہے جبکہ میرا اصلی نام مطابق ادھار کاڈ جان بیگم ہے اب اس کی دستگی کرانی مطلوب ہے کسی کو کوئی عذر ہو تو وہ سات یوم کے اندر اندر جے کے بینک پہلگام کے دفتر میں پیس کرے بعد از معاد کوئی عذر قبول نہیں ہوگا المستہر جان بیگم زوجہ غلام رسول اھنگر سلکن لاری پورا پہلگام

از دفتر نائب تحصیلدار کریری

باایلاس نائب تحصیلدار کریری درخواست منجانب سال غلام محمد صوفی ولد غلام رسول صوفی ساکنہ پنجپورہ برماوصول بیگ واڈ سرٹیفکیٹ اشتہار بمراد آگاہی معاملہ مندر بنوعنوان الصدرا میں درخواست سال غلام محمد صوفی ولد غلام رسول صوفی ساکنہ پنجپورہ دفتر ذیل زیر کاروانی ہے اس کیسٹ رپورٹ پٹواری طالب کیا جائیج سے غنیاں ہوتا ہے کہ درخواست دہندہ عرصہ دراز سے ڈھمبر کو میں سکونت رکھتا/رکھتی ہے سال کے کمبڑی سالانہ آمدنی مبلغ 65000 سال دھرم کو ملک منتقل باشندہ ہے سال بیک واڈ زمہ میں آتا ہے سال کے افراد خاندان در ذیل ہے 1. غلام محمد صوفی ولد غلام رسول صوفی سربرہ 60 سال مردوری 2. صبیہ بیگم زوجہ غلام محمد صوفی 55 سال گھریلو کام 3. ...کم باؤدختر 21 سال . زیر تعلیم 4. لیاقت احمد صوفی پسر 19 سال 5. ...ذخیرہ دختر 16 سال 6. جاسیگ دختر 12 سال

اسکے علاوہ کوئی بھی افراد نہیں بتلایا گیا ہے بہار اتمام معاملات و عام کو زیریہ اشتہار مطالع کیا جاتا ہے کہ اگر کسی کو سرٹیفکیٹ نکلے میں کوئی عذر یا اعتراض ہو تو وہ اپنا عذر یا اعتراض ساقط کرنے کے اندر اندر پیش کریں معاد کرنے کے بعد کوئی عذر یا اعتراض قابل قبول نہیں ہوگا

نائب تحصیلدار کریری

PUBLIC NOTICE

I, Mushtaq Ahmad Mir S/o: Ghulam Hassan Mir R/o Chogal Handwara informed to general public that I have apply for the issuance of Death certificate of my father namely Gh Hassan Mir Son In Law of: Malik War R/o Chogal Handwara who passed away on 10-03-2008 at Home. In this regard if anybody has any objection he/ she may file his/her own objection in the office of Block Development Office Handwara (Registrar Birth & Deaths) within 07 days from the date of publication of this notice. after that no objection will be entertained.

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 AHMAD BURHAN S/O MOHD SHAFI DAR R/O ATHOORA Tehsil KREERI Distt. Baramulla having verified the date of Birth as 18/08/2017 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 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 HANAN MEHRAJ MIR S/O MEHRAJ UD DIN MIR R/O DOLIPORA Tehsil KREERI Distt. Baramulla having verified the date of Birth as 12/03/2014 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

PUBLIC NOTICE

My name & DOB has been wrongly written as DILAVAR & date of birth 03/09/2004 while my correct name is DILAWAR ABBAS MIR & my correct DOB is 06/02/2008 which needs to be corrected if anybody having any objection in this regard he / she may file his/her objection in the office of concerned authorities within seven days from the publication of this notice after that no objection will be entertained.

Name....DILAWAR ABBAS MIR
DOB06/02/2008
R/O ...ATHOORA RESHIPORA KREERI

PUBLIC NOTICE

My daughter's name is wrongly written as NOORAIN YAQOUB in date of birth certificate while her correct name is IBRAT YAQOUB as per adhaar card which needs to be corrected if anybody having any objection in this regard he / she may contact with SRINAGER MUNICIPAL CORPORATION within seven days from the publication of this notice after that no objection will be entertained.

Name....MOHD YAQOUB BHAT
F/O IBRAT YAQOUB
R/O SHALTENG SRINAGER

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is for information of general public that the (Electric bill) power connection is registered on the name GHULAM MOHD BHAT S/O AB RAHM BHAT R/O SHALTENG SRINAGAR . Now this Connection bearing Consumer ID NO 0203050000488 wants to be registered on my name MUKHTAR AHMAD BHAT R/O SHALTENG SRINAGAR./if anybody have any objection in this regard He/She may file his/her objection in the concerned PDD office within seven days from the date of publication of this notice after that no objection will be entertained.

Name...MUKHTAR AHMAD BHAT
S/O ...GHULAM MOHD BAHT
R/O SHALTENG SRINAGER
DISTT..... SRINAGAR

GOVERNMENT OF (U.T) JAMMU & KASHMIR Office Of The Executive Engineer Jal Shakti (Phe) Deptt. Ground Water Division Srinagar Baghi-Ali-Mardan, Nowshara Srinagar. E- mail:- phegwd@yahoo.com, Tel./ Fax No:- 0194-2411285 NOTICE INVITING e-TENDERS

GIST of Detailed e- NIT No:- 68/JS-PHE/GWDS/Mech. of 2024-25.

For and on behalf of Government of UT of J&K, e-tenders from reputed and resourceful Firms/Companies/drilling agencies/Joint Ventures etc for "registered experienced Contractors of Production wells having good experience of ground water drilling" as per details given below. The bidding process shall be completed online on www.jktenders.gov.in in two covers viz. Cover 1st consisting of Pre Qualification Criteria, General Terms and Conditions and Technical Specifications and Cover 2nd shall consist of Financial Bid in the prescribed BOQ.

(Table – I)

S. No	Name of work	Est. Cost Rs. in Lacs	Earnest money	Cost of Tender Document	Time of completion	Class of Contract	Technical Sanction	Major Head /Programme	Tender Call
1.	Providing potable Water Connection for IRP Battalion Headquarter at Ajas Bandipora (Construction of 01 No. 250mm Nominal Dia Casing Gravel Packed Production Tube Well for IRP Battalion at Ajas (Police Colony Ajas) District Bandipora.	Rs.37.53 Lacs	Rs.1,13,000/-	Rs.2,000/-	45 Days	Registered for Construction of Gravel Packed Production Tube Wells	JS-PHE/GWD S/ Other Deptt/04 of 03/2025, Dt: 04-03-2025	Other Department	1 st

Position of Funds:- Available.

- Executive Engineer PCD (PHQ) J&K Jammu letter No: PCD/CC/2024-25/3960, dated:11-02-2025 addressed to the Executive Engineer Jal Shakti (PHE) Hyd. Division Bandipora.
- Authorization conveyed from PHQ vide letter No: BD/GC-128/4186, dated: 17-11-2017 to execute the work upto Rs. 175.00 addressed to Executive Engineer PCD (PHQ) J&K Jammu.
- Post facto Administrative Approval Accorded by the Home Department Govt. of J&K vide order no: 84-Home of 2022, Dated: 21-03-2023.

The Bidding Documents and other details can be downloaded from the website: <https://www.jktenders.gov.in>

From 04.03.2025 (03:00 PM) UPTO 13.03.2025 (11:00 AM)

The Bidding documents consisting of qualifying information, eligibility criteria, specifications, Drawings (if any), Book of quantities (B.O.Q), Set of terms, conditions of contract and other details can be seen / downloaded from the website: <https://www.jktenders.gov.in>

As per Critical Dates/Information scheduled given below

1.	Publishing Date	04-03-2025 (03:00 PM)
2.	Period of Downloading of Bids	04-03-2025 (03:00 PM) upto 13-03-2025 (11:00 AM)
3.	Period of Submission of bids	05-03-2025 (10:00 AM) upto 13-03-2025 (11:00 AM)
4.	Date of opening of Tender.	14-03-2025 (11:00 AM)
5.	Tender Receiving Authority: Executive Engineer , Jal Shakti (PHE) Ground Water Srinagar Kashmir-190011	
6.	Cost of Tender Document : Non-Refundable should be in form of DD /TR/e-challan deposited to Account Head 0215 in favour of Executive Engineer (Jal Shakti) PHE Ground Water Division Srinagar(at Saddar Treasury Srinagar) (The firm shall specify the name of work for which apply) NOTE: In case the firm/agency/contractor submits/uploaded scanned copy of tender document fee in the shape of DD/e-challan, the hard copies shall have to be submitted in the divisional office before opening of cover 2 nd (Financial Cover) of e-NIT. Bid Validity Period: 180 Days	
7.	The bids can be downloaded or uploaded on www .jktenders.gov.in	
8.		

Bids must be accompanied by bid security viz: Earnest Money in shape of CDR/FDR and (The date of CDR/FDR etc must not be prior to 03 months from the date of issuance of this e-Nit and Treasury Receipt (mentioning therein the NIT No., S.No. of work and Advertised Cost as per the NIT) as cost of Tender Document under Account Head 0215 to be pledged in favour of the Executive Engineer Ground Water Division Srinagar (as specified in the table (I) (Page 1st). Bid security will have to be in any one of the forms as specified in the bidding documents and shall be valid for 180 Days after opening of bid. Bids will be opened in the Office of the Executive Engineer Jal Shakti (PHE) Ground Water Division Srinagar (H.Q. Baghi-Ali-Mardan, Nowshara Srinagar) on 14.03.2025 at 11:00 AM. If the office happens to be closed on the date of opening of the bids as specified, the bids will be opened on the next working day at the same time and venue.

DIPK-12641/24
Dated: 05-03-2025

Sd/-
Executive Engineer
Jal Shakti PHE (Deptt.)
Ground Water Division, Srinagar.

Five-Day Training Program Empowers Ganderbal Farmers with Advanced Agricultural Techniques

■ DR.AB QAYOOM

Srinagar, Mar.05: A five-day training program aimed at equipping farmers with modern agricultural knowledge and techniques commenced today at the Directorate of Extension, Sher-e-Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology of Kashmir (SKUAST-K). Organized in collaboration with the Agriculture Department of Ganderbal, the program seeks to enhance farm productivity and sustainability by introducing farmers to the latest agricultural advancements.

Over the next five days, farmers from five blocks of Ganderbal will receive hands-on training in cutting-edge

agricultural technologies developed by SKUAST-K. The initiative is expected to benefit 250 farmers, empowering them with the knowledge and skills necessary to optimize their farming practices.

Hon'ble Vice Chancellor of SKUAST-K, Prof. Nazir Ahmed Ganai, emphasized the critical role of the Extension Wing in disseminating technological advancements to the farming community. He stressed the importance of increasing outreach efforts to ensure maximum benefit to farmers across the region. Prof. Raihana Habib Kanth, Director of Extension at SKUAST-K, welcomed the participants and underscored the significance of modern agricultural innovations in improving



farm outcomes. She also introduced the farmers to various schemes available under the Holistic Agricultural Development Program (HADP), aimed

at supporting and uplifting the farming community. Prof. Kanth provided a comprehensive overview of the latest technologies developed by SKUAST-

K, highlighting their potential to enhance crop yields, improve soil health, and promote sustainable farming practices. The inaugural session saw the par-

ticipation of several distinguished guests, including Prof. Farahnaz Rasool, Prof. Purshotam Singh, and Mr. Zahoor Ahmed Dar, Sub-Divisional Agriculture Officer (SDAO) Ganderbal, along with scientists from SKUAST-K and extension officials from Ganderbal district. Experts from the university led practical demonstrations, providing farmers with first-hand experience in applying new agricultural methods.

During the technical sessions, Dr. Aijaz Ahmed Malik, Dr. Ummaiyah Masoodi, and Dr. Rifat shared their insights on research-driven agricultural practices, emphasizing how adopting scientific techniques can lead to improved farm productivity. Mr. Zahoor Ahmed

Dar acknowledged the significance of such training programs in addressing agricultural challenges and enabling farmers to make informed decisions. Farmers attending the program expressed their enthusiasm and appreciation for the initiative. Ghulam Mohammad, a participant from Ganderbal, highlighted the importance of learning about recent advancements in agriculture. "We are excited to gain new insights and apply these modern techniques in our fields," he remarked. The training program will continue throughout the week, covering essential topics such as organic farming, pest management, precision agriculture, and climate-resilient farming methods. With a strong focus,

Day-2: Distt admin Budgam intensifies clearing legacy waste, special cleanliness drives

Several activities held including sanitation drives & swachhata paintings

■ HT News Network

BUDGAM, MARCH 05: In continuation to its efforts to maintain cleanliness and sanitation in the district, the District Administration Budgam, in collaboration with the Rural Development Department & Municipal Councils, carried out special cleanliness drive today on Day-2 of the special campaign to clear legacy waste.

The drive was carried out at Panchayat Khag A&B, Panchayat Soibugh B&C, Panchayat Rassu, Panchayat Rawalpura, all BDO Office and RDD complex Budgam.

Meanwhile, MC Magam successfully completed the Swachhata Painting at multiple locations, including at Municipal Committee



Magam, boundary wall of Boys Hr Sec School Magam,

public wall at Ferozepur Nalla, SDPO Office and SDH Magam.

Special sanitation drive was conducted in and around mosques and Imambara Magam.

The drive, which is part of the ongoing 'Cleanliness & Clearance of Legacy Waste' initiative, focused on clearing waste, garbage and debris from public spaces, roads, and water bodies.

Teams of officials from the District Administration and Rural Development Department, along with local volunteers, participated in the drive.

The District Administration Budgam is focussed on its commitment towards maintaining a clean and healthy environment for its citizens.

DC Shopian visits Transit accommodation Aowpora

Assesses ongoing works of residential quarters for Migrant employees

■ HT News Network

SHOPIAN, MARCH 05: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Shopian, Shishir Gupta today visited Aowpora Transit accommodation to assess the progress of the construction work of residential quarters for Migrant employees of the district.

During his visit, Gupta stressed the importance of completing the entire project within set specifications.

He also directed the concerned executing agency to expedite the construction process and adhere to established timelines of project completion.

During the inspection, DC reviewed various aspects of the ongoing work and interacted with the officials on-site to address any challenges hindering progress.

To ensure accountability and adherence to quality standards, the



DC instructed the officers to conduct regular inspections and maintain strict supervision over the construction activities.

He also emphasized the need for coordination among different departments to resolve any issues promptly and facilitate the smooth execution of the project.

The DC was accompanied by ADDC, Dr. Nasir Ahmed Lone; ADC, Dr. Zakir Hussain Faaz; ACR and other officers and officials. During his visit, Gupta

stressed the importance of completing the entire project within set specifications.

He also directed the concerned executing agency to expedite the construction process and adhere to established timelines of project completion.

During the inspection, DC reviewed various aspects of the ongoing work and interacted with the officials on-site to address any challenges hindering progress.

02 Medical shops put on show cause notice, operation of 01 disallowed at Shopian

■ HT News Network

SHOPIAN, MARCH 05: A team of officials from the Drugs Control department today conducted inspection of medical shops in various villages of Shopian district including Kumdalan Nagisharan, Hajipora, Chakoora, Dangan and Kaprin.

The team headed by Assistant Drugs Controller Shopian put two medical shops on show cause notice, and the operation of one medical shop was disallowed on the spot at Kundalan for non maintenance of records of scheduled formulations and violations of other conditions of Licenses.

CCTV footage of the inspected firms were also checked by the team, and all shops were asked to adhere to the guidelines of dispensing of drugs.

Toyota Kirloskar Motor Introduces Legend 4X4 in All New Manual Transmission Grade

■ HT News Network

Srinagar: Toyota Kirloskar Motor (TKM) today introduced the Manual Transmission (MT) variant of the Toyota Legend 4X4. Designed for thrill seeking driving enthusiasts, this new variant enhances engagement and control while delivering a perfect blend of power, luxury, and cutting-edge technology.

Built to dominate any terrain, the Legend made its India debut in 2021 with advanced 4X4 capabilities, making it the ideal companion for off-road adventures. At the heart of the Legend 4X4 MT is the renowned 2.8L diesel engine, engineered for unmatched power delivery. Producing 204PS of power and 420Nm of torque, this powertrain is tailored for those who prefer absolute control over their drive.

The 6-speed manual transmission enhances precision, ensuring that enthusiasts can navigate challenging terrains with ease while enjoying the thrill of seamless gear shifts. Speaking on the introduction of the Legend 4X4 MT, Mr. Varinder Wadhwa, Vice President, Sales-Service-Used Car Business, said, "We are thrilled to unveil the new grade of the Toyota Legend, specifically designed in response to the evolving demands and preferences of our valued customers. This new addition of the MT variant will not only further boost the Legend's appeal but also reinforce Toyota's commitment to providing versatile solutions that cater to the dynamic needs of today's customer. We are confident that we are addressing a key gap in the market as we push the boundaries of premium SUV excellence, ensuring that every drive is more dynamic, immersive, and tailored to Indian customers' expectations.

CUKashmir celebrates 'World Wildlife Day'

■ HT News Network

Ganderbal, Mar 5: The Department of Animal Sciences (Zoology), Central University of Kashmir (CUKashmir) conducted a one-day event to commemorate the "World Wildlife Day" on 3rd of March. The programme started by highlighting the genesis and importance of the day by Dr. Lateef who also conducted its proceedings.

In his remarks, Head, Deptt of Zoology, Prof. Mohammad Yousuf highlighted the importance of wildlife to humankind and ecology.

Prof. Abid Hamid, Dean School of Life sciences, in his special remarks, gave a brief introduction about Wildlife and its components. He deliberated on the role of floral and faunal elements in sustaining the ecosystem.

Later, an Expert talk was delivered



by Dr. Khursheed Ahmad, Head, Division of Wildlife Sciences, SKUAST-K, wherein he highlighted the importance of various endemic species of Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh. He emphasized the importance and need of identifying the grey areas of research from Wildlife of Jammu and Kashmir. In addition to this, Dr. Khursheed suggested measures to safeguard the local wildlife species.

The programme was organised by Dr. Mohammad Lateef

(Sr. Assistant Prof. and Nodal Officer for Students Championships for Wildlife) and Dr. Hameem Mushtaq. Later, various students participated in a walkathon and painting competition. Ms. Munazah Fayaz and Ms. Adeeba Irshad were adjudged 1st and 2nd in the painting competition. However, for 3rd position there was a tie between Ms. Ayesha Tariq, Ms. Mehreen Rashid and Ms. Fatima Kar. Dr. Hameem Mushtaq proposed the vote of thanks.

HDFC Bank signs MoU with Indian Air Force, CSC Academy; Launches Project HAKK

■ HT News Network

Srinagar: HDFC Bank today signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Indian Air Force acting through the office of the Assistant Chief of Air Staff - Accounts & Air Veterans and CSC Academy. The day marked the launch of Project HAKK (Hawai Anubhavi Kalyan Kendra) - Serving those who have served. Project HAKK is designed to provide support and services to defence pensioners, veterans and their families.

Initially, 25 centres have been proposed across the Air Force units, which include New Delhi, Bengaluru, Gurgaon, Pune, Secunderabad, Guwahati, Jodhpur and Chandigarh among others. HDFC Bank under its Parivartan program, will engage in building economic inclusiveness for defence

service veterans and next of kin. The Bank in association with CSC Academy (promoted by Common Service Centre E-Governance Limited), will provide skill development and training across financial products and services, empowering them to be financially independent. Dignitaries who were present during the signing of the MoU were Air Marshal PK Ghosh AVSM - Air officer in charge Administration, Ms. Smita Bhagat, Group Head - HDFC Bank, Mr. Sanjay Rakesh, Chairman, CSC Academy and other senior officials from the Indian Air Force, HDFC Bank and CSC e Governance. The MoU was signed by Mr. Satyen Modi, Executive Vice President and Business Head, Alternate Banking Channels & Partnerships - HDFC Bank, Air Vice Marshal Updesh Sharma VSM - Assistant Chief of the Air Staff.

Market Checking Drive Conducted in Handwara to Ensure Fair Pricing During Ramadhan

■ DR.AB QAYOOM

Handwara, Mar.05: HT-NEWSNETWORK In a concerted effort to regulate market prices and prevent hoarding during the holy month of Ramadhan, the Tehsil Administration of Handwara, under the directives of Deputy Commissioner (DC) Kupwara, Ms. Ayushi Sudan, carried out an extensive market-checking drive. The drive was spearheaded by Tehsildar Handwara, Zeeshan Khan, in collaboration with SHO Handwara, officials from the Revenue Department, and the Municipal Committee Handwara. The inspection covered various markets in Handwara to ensure that essential commodities were being sold at fair prices and in adequate supply. During the inspection, officials assessed the pricing of staple food items, vegetables, dairy products, and other essentials, ensuring that traders adhered to government regulations. The team also checked for any instances of hoarding, overpricing, and the sale of



substandard goods. Speaking on the occasion, Tehsildar

Handwara emphasized the importance of the drive, stating, "The primary objective of this initiative is to regulate the prices of essential items, curb hoarding, and ensure the availability of fresh and hygienic products for the people during Ramadhan." The administration has urged local shopkeepers and vendors to strictly adhere to the prescribed price lists and maintain transparency in their trade practices. Officials have also assured that similar inspections will continue in the coming days to safeguard consumer interests and prevent any unfair trade practices.

Residents of Handwara have welcomed the move, appreciating the administration's proactive approach in ensuring that essential commodities remain affordable and available throughout the month of fasting. Authorities have also issued a warning that strict action will be taken against violators found indulging in profiteering or black marketing, as ensuring fair trade practices remains a top priority for the district administration.

DC Rajouri Kick-starts Historic Beautification Project in district

■ HT News Network

RAJOURI, MARCH 5: In a major initiative to enhance the aesthetics of Rajouri town, Deputy Commissioner Abhishek Sharma today kick-started the beautification project, aimed at transforming the area around the airfield and adjacent road into a visually appealing and pedestrian-friendly zone.

The project, which gained momentum following the personal intervention of DC Rajouri, has been made possible through strong civil-military liaison, with the Indian Army permitting development work in the designated area. The start of this initiative clearly reflects the robust coordination



between the civil administration and the Indian Army in working towards public welfare and urban development.

To commence the project, 50 lakh has been earmarked, with additional funds to be allocated as the work progresses.

Key Features of the Beautification Project includes 3D murals depicting martyrs, warriors, cultural heritage, tourist places, and prominent institutions, Aesthetic enhancements and landscape development, Greenery and ornamental plantations and

Well-structured footpaths to ensure safe pedestrian movement.

Speaking on the occasion, DC Rajouri Abhishek Sharma highlighted the significance of the project in modernizing the town while preserving its rich heritage. He expressed his gratitude towards the Indian Army for their cooperation in facilitating the project and also thanked to all stakeholders for their collective efforts in making this vision a reality.

The event was attended by SE PWD Devi Dayal, CPO Maqsood Ahmed, Executive Officer of the Municipality Yusuf Umar, Executive Engineer PWD Sardar Khan, and representatives from the defense establishment.

Block Diwas: Public Outreach Programme held at Chak Gadadhar, Block Kathua

■ HT News Network

KATHUA, MARCH 05: A public outreach programme was organized at Panchayat Ghar, Chak Gadadhar Block Kathua, as part of the Block Diwas initiative today.

The programme witnessed a significant turnout, with Additional Deputy Commissioner Kathua, Ranjit Singh, Chief Planning Officer Kathua, Ranjit Thakur, Ex-PRI members, District and Sectoral officers and a large number of people in attendance.

During the programme, individuals and Ex-PRI members projected demands and apprised the District Administration about the problems faced by the inhabitants of their



respective areas. The key demands and issues raised included augmentation of flood protection infrastructure, better road connectivity, provision of drinking water supply in uncovered areas, demand for a playground and maintenance of bridge and sidewalks

protection on old Samba road at Chak Gadadhar.

The officers and officials from various departments showcased government schemes and services, providing valuable information to the attendees.

Addressing the gathering, Additional Deputy

Commissioner, Ranjit Singh emphasized the objective of Block Diwas, which is to reach out to the people, listen to their grievances, and provide services and knowledge about government schemes at their doorstep. Responding to the demands, the Additional Deputy Commissioner issued on-spot instructions to the concerned departments for time-bound resolution of all the issues. He stressed upon the officers to prioritize the grievances and ensure their timely redressal.

The event concluded with the Additional Deputy Commissioner, Chief Planning Officer, and other officers visiting stalls installed by different departments at the venue.

DC Poonch inaugurates two Automatic Milk Collection Units in Khanetar

■ HT News Network

POONCH, MARCH 05: In a significant development aimed at boosting the dairy sector in Poonch, Deputy Commissioner Vikas Kundal inaugurated two Automatic Milk Collection Units (AMCUs) in Village Khanetar, Tehsil Haveli today.

The inauguration ceremony was attended by Chief Animal Husbandry Officer, Dr. Sheikh Mohammad Younis, along with other concerned officers and officials.

The units, established by the Khanetar Dairy Cooperative Society, Kuniyan, Poonch, and the Sain Baba Self Help Group, Bandichechian, Poonch, represent a key milestone under the Holistic Agriculture Development Programme



(HADP) and the Dairy Development initiative in Jammu and Kashmir.

This event marks an essential step toward enhancing the region's dairy infrastructure, promoting rural empowerment, and supporting local farmers.

In his address, Deputy Commissioner appreciated the dedication of local dairy farmers and self-help groups, recognizing their significant contributions to improving milk produc-

tion and uplifting rural livelihoods. He emphasized that such initiatives are vital for achieving self-sustainability and ensuring financial stability for farmers in the region.

Chief Animal Husbandry Officer also highlighted the crucial role of the Animal Husbandry Department in integrating modern technology into the dairy industry, ensuring that local farmers can thrive and improve the quality of their produce.

VC, Registrar BGSBU conduct detailed review of Developmental Works at BGSBU

■ HT News Network

RAJOURI, MARCH 05: Vice Chancellor of Baba Ghulam Shah Badshah University (BGSBU), Jawaid Iqbal, along with Registrar Abhishek Sharma (DC Rajouri) and Chief Engineer R&B, conducted a comprehensive physical review of the ongoing developmental projects within the university campus.

During the visit, the officers assessed the progress of various infrastructure works, including the Dr APJ Abdul Kalam Library, construction of new academic blocks, hostel facilities, road connectivity, and other essential amenities aimed at enhancing the academic and residential environment for students and faculty.

The team interacted with engineers and project officials to ensure the timely completion of the projects while maintaining quality



standards. Vice Chancellor Jawaid Iqbal emphasized the university's commitment to providing state-of-the-art infrastructure to support academic excellence and research. He directed the concerned authorities to review all pending projects and monitor

ongoing works and address any bottlenecks in execution.

Registrar, Abhishek Sharma stressed the importance of regular monitoring to ensure adherence to timelines and technical specifications. Chief Engineer R&B provided a detailed briefing on the progress of key projects and assured that all necessary measures were being taken for their timely completion. The review underscored the university administration's focus on infrastructural development as a cornerstone.

3-Day Training of Trainers conducted by EDII Ahmedabad concludes at JKEDI

■ HT News Network

RJAMMU, MARCH 05: The Jammu and Kashmir Entrepreneurship Development Institute (JKEDI) on Wednesday successfully concluded a three-day Training of Trainers (ToT) conducted by the Entrepreneurship Development Institute of India (EDII), Ahmedabad.

The program, conducted through online mode from 3rd March and attended by 139 officials of the institute placed at JKEDI campuses of Sempora, Bari Brahmana and district centres. The training program was aimed at enhancing the knowledge and pedagogical skills of faculty mem-



bers to strengthen entrepreneurship education in the region.

The ToT spanned over the topics like Entrepreneurship Development Theories, Processes and Practices, Training Methods and

Content Design, Project Management Fundamentals and Components, Selection of Potential Entrepreneurs, Business Model Canvas, Marketing Management with special reference to Digital Market-

ing, E-Commerce and AI in business growth. Topics like preparation of Business Plans, Mentorship and Counseling were also discussed in detail.

The training programme was coordinated by Dr. Prakash Solanki, Assistant Professor, EDII Ahmedabad with sessions delivered by Dr. Raman Gujral, Professor and Director, Department of Projects, Dr. Piyush Sinha, Senior Visiting Professor, Prof. C.H. Pathak, International Entrepreneurship Coach, Dr. Sheetal Thomas, Associate Faculty, Dr. Pankaj Bharti, Associate Professor and In-charge WRO, Ms. Debopriya Chakraborty, EDII Ahmedabad.

STD initiates proceedings against two dealers for non-compliance of GST norms

■ HT News Network

JAMMU, MARCH 05: Continuing massive crackdown on tax evasion, Jammu and Kashmir State Taxes Department (STD) today initiated proceedings against two traders for not maintaining bills books as per GST norms during inspection drives in Jammu and Udhampur districts of Jammu division. As per officials, in Jammu, enforcement team led by State Taxes Officer (STO) visited ten business units dealing with hardware, electric good and construction items in the Circle R.

The team checked invoices and e-way bills for movement of vehicles. During inspection, the team noticed that two bill books presented by the dealer had blank invoices. The team seized both bill books and intimated concerned circle officer for

further proceedings. In Udhampur, the enforcement teams visited five business units and found one trader, dealing with Mobile phones and accessories, not issuing e-invoicing as per GST norms, besides not producing valid purchase documents with GST number. The team warned the dealer and also intimated concerned Circle to initiate proceedings. Moreover, the enforcement teams also addressed the doubts of traders on the spot regarding many issues related to e-invoicing, e-way bills, GST filing etc. The department further urged the dealers to follow the fair-trade practices and avoid indulging in tax evasion activities or fraudulent practices involving The entire drive was carried out under the guidance of Commissioner State Taxes J&K, P K Bhat and under the supervision of Additional Commissioner Enforcement.

Secretary RDD reviews proposed Annual Implementation Plan under PMAY-G, MGNREGA, NRLM, Himayat Schemes

■ HT News Network

JAMMU, MARCH 05: Secretary, Rural Development Department and Panchayati Raj (RDD&PR), Mohammad Aijaz Asad, today chaired a preparatory meeting ahead of the Empowered Committee session to be held to finalise the Annual Action Plan (AAP) 2025-26 for MGNREGA, Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana - Gramin (PMAY-G), Jammu and Kashmir Rural Livelihoods Mission (JKRLM) and Himayat by the Ministry of Rural Development.

The meeting was attended by Mission Director, JKRLM, Dr. Shubhra Sharma; Director, RDD Kashmir, Shabir Hussain Bhat; Director RDD Jammu, Mumtaz Ali; Director Finance, Umar Khan; Chief Operating Officer Himayat, Rajneesh Gupta; Joint Director Planning,

Kamal Kumar Sharma; Additional Secretary RD&PR, Waseem Raja and all Assistant Commissioner(s) Development.

During the meeting, the Secretary reviewed key programme strategies and financial allocations proposed under the AAP. Discussions centred on employment generation under MGNREGA, housing for rural poor through PMAY-G, self-employment initiatives under NRLM and skill development interventions under Himayat.

The Secretary emphasized the need to further enhance employment opportunities under MGNREGA. Recognizing the programme as a crucial lifeline for rural livelihoods, he stressed the importance of expanding work availability to meet the increasing demand.

He reviewed the estimated person-days (PDs) anticipated for the financial year 2025-



26 prepared by Deputy Commissioners in due consultation with the stakeholders. He also assessed the impact of proposed works in strengthening the rural infrastructure and employment generation.

The Secretary said the department aims to improve the overall quality of life in rural areas by focusing on sustainable infrastructure projects such as rural roads, water conservation structures and community facilities. He reiterated the importance of timely wage payments, a key aspect of MGNREGA aimed at providing financial security to the workers.

The Secretary also reviewed the Annual Action Plan for PMAY-G, which targets construction of new houses during 2025-26. He emphasised the need for efficient monitoring to ensure effective implementation, particularly for landless beneficiaries listed under Awaas Plus. The Secretary reiterated the

importance of convergence with MGNREGA to provide unskilled wages for housing construction, reinforcing the government's commitment towards improving rural living conditions. While reviewing the Annual Action Plan (AAP) 2025-26 of the Jammu and Kashmir Rural Livelihoods Mission (JKRLM), the Secretary emphasized that its primary objective is to strengthen self-employment opportunities, financial inclusion and skill development for rural women. He stated that the plan focuses on expanding Self-Help Groups (SHGs), providing access to credit and promoting both farm and non-farm livelihood activities across the Union Territory.

A key highlight of the plan was the "Lakshpati Didi" initiative, designed to empower rural women by enhancing their earning potential through skill development and entrepreneurship.

Terrorist responsible for 2021 Kabul airport bombing being extradited to face justice in US: President Trump

■ HT News Network

NEW YORK/WASHINGTON, Mar 5: US President Donald Trump said a “top terrorist” responsible for the August 2021 bombing at Kabul airport as American forces withdrew from Afghanistan has been apprehended and is being brought to the country to face justice.

Trump said three and a half years ago, ISIS terrorists killed 13 American service members and countless others in the Abbey Gate bombing during the “disastrous and incompetent withdrawal” from Afghanistan.

“America is once again standing strong against the forces of radical Islamic terrorism,” Trump said Tuesday night in an address to the Joint Session of Congress, the first of his second term in the White House.A report in CNN said that a White House official confirmed that Mohammad Sharifullah, allegedly involved in the planning of the attack, was being extradited to the US.

“Not that they were withdrawing, it



was the way they withdrew. Perhaps the most embarrassing moment in the history of our country,” Trump said.

“Tonight, I am pleased to announce that we have just apprehended the top terrorist responsible for that atrocity and he is right now on his way here to face the swift

sword of American justice,” Trump said as members of the Republican Party broke into an applause and gave the President a standing ovation.

Trump thanked the Government of Pakistan for “helping arrest this monster”. The August 26, 2021 suicide bombing

attack at Hamid Karzai International Airport’s Abbey Gate killed 13 US service members and roughly 170 Afghan civilians, injuring many others, coming just days after the Taliban took over Kabul.

Trump described the day of the attack as a “horrible day”, saying “Such incompetence was shown that when (Russian President Vladimir) Putin saw what happened, I guess he said, ‘Wow, maybe this is my chance’. That’s how bad it was. Should have never happened. Grossly incompetent people,” Trump said.

Minutes after Trump made the announcement during his address in the US Capitol, FBI Director Kash Patel said in a post on X “As President Trump just announced, I can report that tonight the FBI, DOJ, and CIA have extradited one of the terrorists responsible for the murder of the 13 American soldiers at Abbey Gate during the disastrous Afghanistan withdrawal. One step closer to justice for these American heroes and their families.”

During his address, Trump acknowledged Patel, voicing appreciation for his work. (PTI)

Ukraine working with US, hopes for support amid Trump’s criticism: Zelenskyy

■ HT News Network

KYIV, Mar 5: Ukraine is working with the United States and hopes for US support on the path to peace, which is needed “as soon as possible,” Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said on Monday, an hour after US President Donald Trump’s post on social media.

Earlier on Monday, Trump described Zelenskyy’s words that peace in Ukraine is “very, very far away” as the “worst statement,” saying that the US will no longer tolerate this situation.

“We are working together with America and our European partners and very much hope on US support on the path to peace. Peace is needed as soon as possible,” Zelenskyy wrote on X.

On Friday, talks between Zelenskyy and Trump in Washington collapsed following their verbal altercation in front of reporters in the Oval Office. The Ukrainian leader was criticised for his purported lack of gratitude for US help and disrespectful behavior in the White House.

Zelenskyy was asked to leave, despite the Ukrainian delegation’s reportedly begging the hosts to resume the meeting, which was supposed to culminate in the signing of an agreement on rare earth metals and a joint press conference. Trump called off the signing of the deal with Zelenskyy, already ratified by the Ukrainian government, and said the Ukrainian leader was not welcome back in the White House until he was “ready for peace.”

Tunisia puts 40 opposition figures on trial, Activists say move is politically motivated

■ HT News Network

TUNIS, Mar 5: A Tunisian court opened a high-profile trial Tuesday in which 40 people, including leading opposition figures, stand accused of conspiring against state security. Activists protested outside, calling it a baseless case and part of a politically driven crackdown.

Nine of the defendants were not allowed to appear at the trial, deemed by the court as too dangerous to release from custody. Their lawyers demanded the right of their clients to appear before a judge, as did the protesters outside.

In addition to opposition politicians, the accused include former diplomats, business leaders, journalists, lawyers and human rights defenders, and some have spent more than two



years in pre-trial detention. Others have fled abroad.

According to lawyers, some defendants risk capital punishment if convicted. The charges include plotting against state security and belonging to a terrorist group for some, while others are suspected of illegal connections with foreign parties and diplomats.

Critics of Tunisian President Kais Saied say the charges are fabricated and the trial is politically motivated.

The North African country’s president, who was re-elected for a second term last year, says the defendants are “traitors and terrorists,” as they accuse him of staging a coup in 2021.

The birthplace of the Arab Spring pro-democracy uprisings, Tunisia has seen a significant rollback of freedoms under Saied. Critics, including the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, have accused Saied’s govern-

ment of using the judiciary to stifle dissent since his 2021 power grab, which dissolved parliament and expanded executive authority.

Saied’s supporters argue his crackdowns are necessary to stabilize a nation grappling with inflation, unemployment, and corruption. Many Tunisians blame political elites for economic mismanagement. Global rights groups condemned the court case, including treatment of the defendants.

“The documented systematic violations of their rights during the pre-trial phase of the criminal proceedings significantly undermine the whole prosecution and the legitimacy, independence and impartiality of the trial, the International Commission of Jurists (ICJ) said in a statement. (AP)

China hikes defence budget to USD 249 billion amid hectic military modernisation

■ HT News Network

BEIJING, Mar 5: China on Wednesday announced a 7.2 per cent increase of its national defence budget totalling to USD 249 billion this year amid its hectic efforts to modernise armed forces, including fast paced development of warships and new generation fighter jets.

The planned defence expenditure for the country is 1.784665 trillion yuan (about USD 249 billion) this year, according to a draft budget report submitted to China’s Parliament by Premier Li Qiang, state-run Xinhua news agency reported.

Last year, China increased its defence budget by 7.2 per cent to about USD 232 billion (1.67 trillion yuan). China has the world’s second-largest military budget after the US whose latest defence spending amounted to over USD 890 billion as proposed by President Donald Trump.

The Chinese defence spending is amounted to three times that of India’s Rs 681, 210 crore (USD 78.8 billion). China’s defence budget figures are viewed by critics with scepticism in the light of massive military modernisation, including building aircraft carriers, rapid construction of advanced naval ships and modern stealth aircraft being carried out at a feverish pitch by the Chinese military. Announcing the annual budget which includes the defence spending at the opening of the annual session of China’s parliament, the National People’s Congress (NPC) Chinese Premier Li Qiang said last year, China made major new progress in national defence and military development. Li emphasised on the Chinese President Xi Jinping’s core leadership of the ruling Communist Party as well as the People’s Liberation Army (PLA) and the military follow the party leadership. Xi is also the Chairman of the Central Military Commission (CMC) which is the overall high command of the military.

“We will stay committed to the Party’s absolute leadership over the people’s armed forces, thoroughly implement the system of ultimate responsibility resting with the chairman of the Central Military Commission, continue improving the political conduct of the military,” he said.



The Chinese military functioned under the leadership of the Communist Party unlike the armed forces of other countries which functioned under the government.

“We will step up military training and combat readiness, speed up the development of new combat capabilities, and establish a framework of modern military theories with Chinese characteristics, so as to firmly safeguard China’s sovereignty, security, and development interests,” Li said in his work report submitted to the NPC.

On Tuesday, Lou Qinjian, spokesperson for the NPC, defended China’s increasing defence expenditure, saying that “peace needs to be safeguarded with strength”. Since 2016, China’s annual defence spending has maintained single-digit growth for nine years in a row, he said, adding that China’s defence expenditure as a share of GDP has been kept under 1.5 per cent for many years. In his budget speech, Li said China will complete the tasks laid down in the 14th Five-Year Plan for strengthening the military, intensify the implementation of major defence-related projects, and move faster to develop the network information system. The government will also promote military-civilian reforms, refine the framework and layout of defence-related science, technology, he said. “We in government at every level will provide strong support for the development of national defence and the armed forces and refine the mechanisms for strengthening mutual support between civilian sectors and the military, so as to consolidate and strengthen the rock-solid unity between the military.”

Pakistan holds funeral prayers for 12 killed in double suicide bombing near military base

■ HT News Network

PESHAWAR, Mar 5: Schools and shops closed as residents of a northwestern Pakistani city prepared for the funeral ceremonies on Wednesday for 12 people killed in a twin suicide bombing that targeted a military base the day before.

A militant group linked with the Pakistani Taliban claimed responsibility for the bombing in Bannu on Tuesday evening when two suicide bombers breached the wall surrounding the base.

Most of the local residents were breaking their daylong fast during the Muslim holy month of Ramadan or praying at a nearby mosque. After the explosions, other attackers stormed the compound and set off a firefight with the troops.

The powerful blasts tore through walls and ripped off roofs and also severely damaged the mosque. Along with the 12 killed, 30 people were also wounded in the attack, some of whom were reported to be in critical condition.

The casualty figures did not include troops. It was not immediately known how many security forces were killed or injured in the assault or the subsequent gunfight.

On Wednesday, a mechanical digger was clearing away rubble where homes used to stand, and debris-covered prayer mats lay crumpled on the mosque floor.

A day of mourning was being observed, said Bannu community elder Alam Khan, and joint funeral prayers were to be held for the victims at a sports complex in the area.

Gunshots could still be heard early on Wednesday as security forces combed through the area, looking to clear it of any militants involved in the attack.

“All education institutions are closed,” Khan said. “Most shops are also shut. Rescue workers have completed their operation by recovering the bodies of three deceased worshippers who were trapped under the collapsed roof of the mosque.”



US does not believe everything Putin says is true, willing to engage in conversation: Vance

■ HT News Network

MOSCOW, Mar 5 : The United States does not believe everything Russian President Vladimir Putin says is true, but Washington is ready to hold talks and establish reasonable relations, US Vice President JD Vance said.

“He said he’s willing to talk peace. And of course, we trust but verify. We want to have the conversation. We don’t assume that everything that anybody tells us is true. That’s why we want to engage in this conversation. It’s diplomacy one on one, you have to have a reasonable relationship with somebody to be able to even start the conversation. The president wants to negotiate a settlement. How can you negotiate if you can’t even talk to somebody” Vance told Fox News. (UNI)

Israeli researchers develop noninvasive method to track cancer progression

■ HT News Network

JERUSALEM, Mar 5: Israeli researchers have developed a new noninvasive method to monitor molecular processes deep within tissues in cancer and other diseases, the Israel Institute of Technology (Technion) said in a statement on Tuesday.

The approach, termed “chemical tomography,” allows researchers to track cancer progression at different stages, better understand cancer biology, and map biochemical pathways, metabolic markers, and molecular processes involved in cancer development.

Inspired by the compound eye of insects, the method provides insights into tissue function by analysing volatile organic compounds (VOCs) in exhaled breath, saliva, sweat, and other bodily fluids, using a graphene-based sensor array, with the graphene sensors acting as the eye and generative artificial intelligence as the brain to process data.

It allows for the continuous monitoring of structural and molecular changes in organoids and 3D cell-based models that replicate the characteristics of natural tissues, which are crucial in biomedical research. Unlike existing technologies that often damage tissues or fail to monitor deep-tissue processes, this method provides a “low-cost, accurate, and non-invasive” solution. In study, VOC monitoring of a human breast tissue organoid revealed protein and genomic data linked to the transition of healthy tissues into cancerous ones. Beyond cancer applications, the method has the potential to “diagnose issues in various organs” and “transmit real-time health data to an external monitoring system,” which is expected to accelerate key advancements in personalised medicine and early disease detection. (UNI)

Trump hits ‘pause’ on US aid to Ukraine after Oval dustup, pressuring Zelenskyy on Russia talks

■ HT News Network

WASHINGTON, Mar 5 : President Donald Trump has directed a “pause” to US assistance to Ukraine after a disastrous Oval Office meeting as Trump seeks to pressure Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy to engage in peace talks with Russia.

A White House official on Monday said Trump is focused on reaching a peace deal to end the more than three-year war sparked by Russia’s all-out invasion of Ukraine, and wants Zelenskyy “committed” to that goal. The official added that the US was “pausing and reviewing” its aid to “ensure that it is contributing to a solution.” The official spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss the assistance. (AP)

Indian-origin nurse attacked by patient in Florida, could lose eyesight

■ HT News Network

HOUSTON, Mar 5: A 67-year-old Indian-origin nurse was repeatedly punched in the face by a patient at a Florida hospital in a possible hate crime that could lead to her losing her eyesight, local media has reported. Nurse Leela Lal, also known as Leelamma Lal, was assaulted and “every bone of her face broken” by Stephen Eric Scantlebury, a 33-year-old patient she was tending to in the psychiatric ward at the Palms West Hospital in West Palm Beach, Florida on February 18, police said. In a local court, a police officer testified that a video clip showed Scantlebury saying, ‘Indians are bad’ and ‘I just beat the (expletive) out of an Indian doctor’, news channel WPTV.com said.

Scantlebury faces a charge of attempted second-degree murder in the attack and also faces a hate crime enhancement, which could result in harsher penalties if he is convicted, the media said.

WPTV.com reported after the incident that HCA Florida HealthCare, which runs the Palm West Hospital, said the attack occurred “within a matter of seconds” and was “witnessed by multiple people”.



Cabinet clears 2 ropeway projects Sonprayag to Kedarnath, Govindghat to Hemkund Sahib ji

AGENCIES

NEW DELHI, MAR 5 (UNI)

In a major boost to pilgrims, the Government on Wednesday approved the construction of two ropeways from Sonprayag to Kedarnath (12.9 km long) and from Govindghat to Hemkund Sahib Ji (12.4 km long) to be built at a cost of Rs 4,081.28 crore and Rs 2,730.13 crore respectively.

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA), Chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has approved the construction of two ropeways and both the projects will be developed on Design, Build, Finance, Operate and Transfer (DBFOT) mode at a total capital cost of Rs. 4,081.28 crore and Rs 2,730.13 crore respectively, I&B Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw told media after the meeting.

The first ropeway is planned to be developed in public-private partnership and will be based on the most advanced Tricable Detachable Gondola (3S) technology with a design capacity of 1,800 passengers per hour per direction (PPHPD) carrying 18,000 passengers per day, the Minister said adding the ropeway project will be a boon to the pilgrims visiting Kedar-



nath as it would provide an environment-friendly, comfortable and fast connectivity and reduce travel time in one direction from about 8 to 9 hours to about 36 minutes.

Similarly, in the second ropeway project, currently, the journey to the Hemkund Sahib Ji is a challenging 21-km uphill trek from Govindghat and is covered on foot or by ponies or palanquins. The proposed ropeway is planned to provide convenience to pilgrims and visiting the Hemkund Sahib Ji and the tourists visiting the Valley of Flowers and will ensure all-weather last mile connectivity between Govindghat and Hemkund Sahib Ji.

The ropeway between Govindghat and Hemkund Sahib Ji is planned to be developed in public-private partnership and will be based on Monocable Detachable Gondola (MDG) from Govindghat

to Ghangaria (10.55 km), seamlessly integrated with the most advanced Tricable Detachable Gondola (3S) technology from Ghangaria to Hemkund Sahib Ji (1.85 km) with a design capacity of 1,100 passengers per hour per direction (PPHPD) carrying 11,000 passengers per day, Vaishnaw said.

The two ropeway projects will also generate substantial employment opportunities during construction and operations as well as in allied tourism industries like hospitality, travel, foods & beverages (F&B) and tourism throughout the year.

The development of ropeway project is a significant step towards fostering balanced socio-economic development, enhancing last-mile connectivity in hilly regions and fostering rapid economic growth.

The journey to the Kedarnath temple is a

challenging 16-km uphill trek from Gaurikund and is currently covered on foot or by ponies, palanquins and helicopter. The proposed ropeway is planned to provide convenience to pilgrims visiting the temple and ensure all-weather connectivity between Sonprayag and Kedarnath.

Kedarnath is one of the 12 sacred Jyotirlingas situated at an elevation of 3,583 m (11,968 ft) in the Rudraprayag district of the State of Uttarakhand. The temple is open for pilgrims for about 6 to 7 months in a year from Akshaya Tritiya (April-May) to Diwali (October-November) and is visited by about 20 lakh pilgrims annually during the season.

Hemkund Sahib Ji is a highly revered pilgrimage site situated at an elevation of 15,000 ft in Chamoli district of the State of Uttarakhand. The Gurudwara established at the holy site is open for about 5 months in a year between May and September and is visited by about 1.5 to 2 lakh pilgrims annually.

The trek to Hemkund Sahib Ji also serves as the gateway to the famous Valley of Flowers, a national park recognized as the UNESCO World Heritage site, located in the pristine Garhwal Himalayas.

Trump targets India over 'high' tariffs, says reciprocal tariffs to kick-in from April 2

AGENCIES

WASHINGTON/NEW DELHI, MARCH 5 (UNI)

In another attack on Indian tariffs, US President Donald Trump said that "India charges US auto tariffs higher than 100 percent", which he termed as "not fair", and announced that reciprocal tariffs would kick in from April 2.

President Trump, who had raised the issue of high Indian tariffs during his meeting with Prime Minister Narendra Modi in the White House last month and even during their phone call after his swearing-in, clubbed India along with China, and the European Union as among countries that charge "tremendously higher tariffs" on US products.

In his address to the joint US Congress, Trump said:

"If you don't make your product in America; however, under the Trump administration, you will pay a tariff, and in some cases, a rather large one.

"Other countries have used tariffs against us for decades, and now it's our turn to start using them against those other countries. On average, the European Union, China, Brazil, India, Mexico and Canada, have you heard of



them? And countless other nations charge us tremendously higher tariffs than we charge them.

"It's very unfair. India charges US auto tariffs higher than 100%."

He said that China's average tariff on US products "is twice what we charge them. And South Korea's average tariff is four times higher. Think of that four times higher."

"But that's what happens. This is happening by friend and foe. This system is not fair to the United States and never was."

He announced the slapping of reciprocal tariffs from April 2.

"And so on April 2nd, I wanted to make an April 1st, but I didn't want to be accused of April Fool's Day. That's what one day

would cost us, a lot of money, but we're going to do it in April. I'm a very superstitious person. April 2nd reciprocal tariffs kick in and whatever they tariff us, other countries, we will tariff them. That's reciprocal back and forth. Whatever they tax us, we will tax them."

He continued: "If they do non-monetary tariffs to keep us out of their market, then we will do non-monetary barriers to keep them out of our market. It's a lot of that too. They don't even allow us in that market. We will take in trillions and trillions of dollars and create jobs like we have never seen before.

"I did it with China and I did it with others and the Biden administration couldn't do anything

about it because there was so much money. They couldn't do anything about it. We've been ripped off for decades by nearly every country on Earth, and we will not let that happen any longer."

On Tuesday, the Trump administration announced its high 25 percent tariffs on neighbouring countries and on Canada and Mexico. The US also doubled tariffs on Chinese goods from 10 percent to 20 percent on Tuesday, citing lack of action from China on its alleged role in fentanyl production. India has a growing trade surplus with the US. Over the last decade, India's goods trade surplus with the US has doubled to \$35 billion, driven by strong exports in electronics, pharma, and textiles, all of which could now be vulnerable to reciprocal tariff measures.

India's imports from the US include petroleum crude, pearls, precious stones, electrical machinery, aircraft parts, and military equipment.

Earlier, Trump had threatened to impose 100 per cent tariffs on BRICS nations, including India, if they undermine the US dollar. He has warned that any attempt by BRICS nations to create a rival currency would lead to such tariffs.

DRDO conducts high-altitude trials of indigenous ILSS for LCA Tejas aircraft

AGENCIES

NEW DELHI, MAR 5 (UNI)

The Defence Bio-Engineering & Electro Medical Laboratory (DEBEL), a Bengaluru-based lab under the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO), successfully conducted high-altitude trials of the Indigenous On-Board Oxygen Generating System (OBOGS)-based Integrated Life Support System (ILSS) for the LCA Tejas aircraft, on Tuesday.

The OBOGS-based ILSS is a cutting-edge system designed to generate and regulate breathable oxygen for pilots during flight, eliminating dependence on traditional liquid oxygen cylinder-based systems. The ILSS underwent rigorous testing on the LCA-Prototype Vehicle-3 aircraft of Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) / Aeronautical Development Agency (ADA), meeting stringent aeromedical standards in varied flight conditions, including altitudes of up to 50,000



feet above mean sea level and high-G manoeuvre, a Defence Ministry statement said.

Performance evaluations covered critical aspects such as oxygen concentration, demand breathing, availability of 100 percent oxygen, aerobatic manoeuvre at required altitudes for full functional testing of anti-G valve, Breathing Oxygen System (BOS) ON during taxiing, take off, cruise, G turns and rejoin approach and landing.

Following flight clearance from Centre for Mili-

tary Airworthiness & Certification (CEMILAC), the system successfully met all specified parameters. Beyond OBOGS, the ILSS integrates 10 line replaceable units, including the low-pressure breathing regulator, BOS, emergency oxygen system, oxygen sensor, anti-G valve, and other advanced components. This would ensure real-time oxygen generation, enhancing pilot endurance and operational effectiveness.

The system has been manufactured by L&T as a development cum pro-

duction partner, reflecting a significant collaboration between DRDO and Indian defence industries.

Notably, the ILSS has 90 percent indigenous content, furthering India's self-reliance in aerospace technology. With appropriate modifications, the system can also be adapted for use in MiG-29K and other aircraft.

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh congratulated DRDO, IAF, Public Sector Undertakings, and industry partners on this remarkable achievement, emphasising that this development reinforces India's commitment to cutting-edge defence technologies and aligns with the vision of 'Viksit Bharat 2047'.

Secretary, Department of Defence R&D and Chairman DRDO Samir V Kamat also lauded the DRDO team, the IAF, and industry partners for their contributions towards the successful high-altitude trial of the indigenous ILSS for LCA Tejas.

TN All party meet strongly opposes population-based delimitation, demands assurance from PM to conduct it in based on 1971 population

AGENCIES

CHENNAI, MAR 5 (UNI)

Strongly condemning the Centre's proposed delimitation exercise based on population, the All Party meeting convened by the Tamil Nadu Government on Wednesday demanded an assurance from Prime Minister Narendra Modi in the Lok Sabha that it would be conducted only based of the 1971 population census, besides constituting a Joint Action Committee (JAC) comprising MPs from all the Southern States, including Tamil Nadu, to create an awareness among the people.

An unanimous resolution was adopted at the meeting, chaired by Chief Minister and DMK President M K Stalin, in which leaders of nearly 40 parties-barring the BJP-setting aside their political differences, participated and spoke in one voice against the proposed population-based exercise



which would reduce the number of Lok Sabha seats from the present 39 to 31.

The resolution, adopted after more than three-hour long deliberations held at the State Secretariat, said the proposed population-based delimitation poses a grave threat to the country's federalism and the rights of political representation of Southern States.

While strongly condemning the delimitation of Parliamentary seats based on population, the resolution moved by Mr Stalin referred to the assurance given by the then

Prime Minister in the year 2000 that the delimitation exercise would be conducted based on the 1971 population and sought a firm assurance from Mr Modi in this regard.

"Mr Modi should give an assurance in the Lok Sabha that as promised in 2000 by the then Prime Minister, the present delimitation will continue for a further period of 30 years from 2026", the resolution said.

It also urged the Centre to bring in an Amendment ensuring that in the event of enhancing the existing number of Parliamentary

seats, the number of constituencies in the Southern States, including Tamil Nadu, will be increased based on the present strength of MPs in both the

Houses of Parliament which was done as per the 1971 population. While asserting that Tamil Nadu was not against the delimitation exercise, Mr Stalin said at the same time the proposed exercise should not result in punishing the states which had been effectively implementing various socio-economic schemes for the last 50 years. Stating that it was the least demand being put forth before the Centre by this All Party meeting, the resolution said with a view to carry forward the struggle and to create an awareness among the people, a Joint Action Committee comprising MPs from Tamil Nadu and Southern States should be constituted by sending a formal invitation to their respective parties.

LDF, UDF sympathetic to terrorist organisations: Prakash Javadekar

AGENCIES

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, MARCH 5 (UNI)

Accusing both Kerala's ruling CPI(M)-led Left Democratic Front (LDF) and Congress-headed opposition United Democratic Front (UDF) of being sympathetic to terror outfits, the BJP on Wednesday asked both combinations to explain their relationship with the Social Democratic Party of India (SDPI).

"LDF and UDF have to explain their relationship with SDPI. Both fronts were

always sympathetic with terror outfits," BJP state in-charge Prakash Javadekar said in a message on 'X.'

Javadekar made the remarks while responding to the arrest of MK. Faizy, the National President of the Social Democratic Party of India (SDPI) - allegedly a political front of the banned terrorist outfit PFI.

"The revelations of the investigation before the court is that SDPI is nothing but PFI," he said.

"Modi government banned PFI, and has exposed SDPI, whose presi-

dent is arrested," he added. Faizy was arrested on March 3 from Indira Gandhi International (IGI) Airport, New Delhi, under the provisions of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA). The Special Court, Patiala House Court, has remanded him to the custody of the Enforcement Directorate (ED) for 6 days.

The ED initiated the investigation against PFI and others under PMLA, 2002. The investigators have claimed that the office bearers, members and cadres of PFI were conspir-

ing and raising/collecting funds from within India and abroad through banking channels, Hawala, donations etc for committing and financing terrorist acts across India.

During search proceedings conducted on December 3, 2020, at various locations belonging to PFI and its office bearers, the central agency claimed to have discovered and seized numerous incriminating documents and digital evidence.

The ED has claimed the documents establish that PFI used to control, fund

and supervise the activities of SDPI; that SDPI is a front of PFI having common members/cadres and leaders, and that SDPI was dependent on PFI for its day-to-day functions, policy making, selecting candidates for the election campaign, public programmes, cadre mobilisation and related activities.

A document titled "Conceptual clarity about Organisation and Party" was recovered during the searches conducted at Unity House, Kozhikode (PFI's Kerala State HQ). This

document provides insight into the true objectives of the PFI, describing it as an organization committed to advancing an Islamic movement in India by endorsing the principles of Jihad in all forms, the agency has claimed. According to the investigators, PFI It positions itself internally as an Islamic movement and externally as a social movement. To achieve these goals, the PFI has established SDPI and several front organizations.

A letter addressed to 'Faizy Sahab' was also said

to have been recovered during the searches conducted at Unity House, Kozhikode, which mentions 'Procedures of selecting candidates' for state assembly and parliamentary elections. The document reveals that PFI was directing SDPI on the process of selecting candidates for both Assembly and Parliamentary elections, it has been alleged.

The letter, addressed to "Faizy Sahab" (purportedly, M.K. Faizy), lays out a detailed and structured framework for candidate selection, involving multiple

levels of the organisation.

Further, there are several copies of the minutes of meetings and handwritten documents revealing evidence of PFI funding elections contested by SDPI, and the approval by the National Executive Council (NEC) of PFI for SDPI to collect funds in Gulf countries. The PFI is also said to have covered the legal expenses for SDPI members accused in criminal cases registered by the police which have been seized during the searches conducted at Unity House, Kozhikode.

Holi Skin and Hair Care Tips



SHAHNAZ HUSAIN

Holi Hai!! The vibrant festival of colors of happiness is just around the corner. Barely a few days are left before you head to play joyfully and get soaked in colour game. The Holi fever has set it and it is the time of the year when you are excited about looking like a multi-coloured canvas. The festival brings with itself, a whiff of mishmash of dry gual and buckets of water. When you decide to indulge in a burst of colours, what bothers people most is how to deal with skin and hair issues caused by the rampant use of harmful toxin colours that can make your skin,

hair dry and frizzy. While you've zeroed in on where you're going to be celebrating Holi with splashes of harmful toxins ,make sure to follow these Holi skin care tips to give your hair and skin that extra protection from chemical laden harsh colors to counter ill effects on colour stained faces, parched hair and irritated skin . Holi is celebrated at a time when Nature renews and refreshes herself. With a little care, we can do the same and also sustain our youth and beauty. The dry "Gulal" and the wet colours of today are not derived from natural sources. They contain chemicals, shiny particles of mica and even lead, which not only irritate the skin, but collect on the scalp. Since Holi is played out of doors, sun-exposure can also have a detrimental effect on the skin. Apart from harmful UV radiation, sun-exposure makes the skin dry by causing deple-

tion of moisture and also tans the skin. The skin can become dry and dull after playing holi. Remember to apply a sunscreen 20 minutes before going out to in the sun. Use a sunscreen of SPF 20 and above. If your skin is prone to pigmented patches, select one with a higher SPF. Most sunscreens have built-in moisturizers. If your skin is very dry, first apply the sunscreen, wait for a few minutes and then apply a moisturizer. Light daytime make-up may be used. Touch up your eyes with eye pencil or kaajal and use a lip gloss. The real problem is removal of colours after playing holi. Do not wash your face with soap immediately, because soap is alkaline and causes further dryness. Instead, use a cleansing cream, or lotion. Apply and massage it on the face. Then wipe off with moist cotton wool. Remember to cleanse the area around the eyes too, using a light touch. A

cleansing gel helps to dissolve the colours and facilitates their removal. To make your own cleanser, take half a cup of cold milk and add one teaspoon of any vegetable oil, like "til," olive or sunflower oil. Mix well. Dip cotton wool into this mixture and use it to cleanse the skin. Sesame seed (til) oil can be used to remove colours from the body, massaging it on the skin. This not only helps to remove the colours, but gives added protection to the skin. Sesame seed (til) oil actually helps to counteract sun-damage. While bathing, scrub the body gently with a loofah or wash cloth. Immediately after your bath, apply a moisturizer on the face and body, while the skin is still damp. This helps to seal in moisture. The day after holi, you may have to deal with the effects of sun-exposure, like dryness or tanned skin. Mix two tablespoons of honey with half a cup of

curd. Add a pinch of turmeric. Apply this on the face, neck and arms. Leave it on for 20 minutes and wash off with water. Honey is a powerful natural moisturizer and helps to soften the skin, while curd will nourish and restore the normal acid-alkaline balance. It also removes tan. **Hair Care** The dry "Gulal" and the wet colours of today are not derived from natural sources. They contain chemicals, shiny particles of mica and even lead, which collect on the scalp and irritate it. Apply a protective leave-on conditioner or hair serum before playing Holi. They coat the hair and protect it from chemical colours, pollutants and sun-exposure. They also add shine to the hair. While washing the hair, first rinse with plenty of plain water to wash away the dry colours and tiny particles of mica. Then apply a mild herbal shampoo, working it into the

hair with the fingers. Massage the scalp gently and rinse thoroughly with water again. Add the juice of a lemon to a mug of water and use it as a last rinse. This helps to restore the acid-alkaline balance of the scalp. Beer can also be used as a last rinse. In fact, it will soften and condition the hair. Add the juice of a lemon to the beer. Pour over the hair after shampoo. Leave on for a few minutes and rinse off with plain water. If there is itching, add two tablespoons of vinegar to a mug of water and use it as a last rinse. This helps to reduce itching. However, if the itching continues, and there is rash and redness, there may be an allergy to the colour. Consult a doctor as soon as possible. Within the next few days give your hair a nourishing treatment. Mix egg yolk with almond oil or olive oil and massage it lightly into the hair and scalp. Then dip a towel in hot water,

squeeze out the water and wrap the hot towel around the head, like a turban. Keep it on for 5 minutes. Repeat the hot towel wrap 3 or 4 times. This helps the hair and scalp absorb the oil better. Wash your hair after an hour. Next day give your hair a nourishing treatment. Mix one tablespoon of pure coconut oil with one teaspoon castor oil. Heat and apply on the hair. Then dip a towel in hot water, squeeze out the water and wrap the hot towel around the head, like a turban. Keep it on for 5 minutes. Repeat the hot towel wrap 3 or 4 times. This helps the hair and scalp absorb the oil better. Wash your hair after an hour. Conditioning with henna would help to restore damage to the hair, adding shine and body. To the henna powder, add four teaspoons each of lemon juice and coffee, two eggs, two teaspoons oil and enough curd to mix into a paste. Apply on the

hair and wash your hair after an hour. **Make your own natural colours for Holi** Simmer Tesu flowers in water. Leave overnight. Strain and use the water to play Holi. Tesu flowers leave a yellow colour. The botanical name of Tesu is Butea monosperma. Henna powder can be mixed with gram flour (besan) or maize flour (makki) and used as dry green colour. Turmeric (haldi) can be used both as dry and wet colour. Turmeric can be mixed with gram flour for dry colour. Or, it can be added to water and boiled. Leave overnight and then use. Boil beetroot in water. This leaves a bright magenta colour. Cool and use the water. Or extract beetroot juice, add a little water and then use it. **The author is international fame beauty expert and is called herbal queen of India**

Over half of adults, third of children to become overweight or obese globally by 2050: Lancet

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI

A most comprehensive global analysis to date, including India, has estimated that overweight and obesity rates in adults (aged 25 or older) and children and adolescents (aged 5-24 years) more than doubled over the past three decades (1990-2021), affecting 2.11 billion adults and 493 million young people worldwide in 2021, according to a study published in The Lancet. Weight gain varies widely across the globe with more than half of the world's adults with overweight or obesity in 2021 living in just eight countries – China (402 million), India (180 million), the US (172 million), Brazil (88 million), Russia (71 million), Mexico (58 million), Indonesia (52 million), and Egypt (41 million). Without urgent policy reform and action, around 60 per cent of adults (3.8 billion) and a third (31 per cent) of all children and adolescents (746 million) are forecast to be living with either overweight or obesity by 2050, according to the major analysis



from the Global Burden of Disease Study BMI Collaborators, published in The Lancet. By 2050, one in three young people with obesity (130 million) are forecast to be living in just two regions – north Africa and the Middle East and Latin America and the Caribbean – with deleterious health, economic, and societal consequences, the study warned. Additionally, nearly a quarter of the world's adult population with obesity in 2050 are predicted to be aged 65 or older, intensifying the strain on already overburdened health-care systems and wreaking havoc on health services in low-resource countries. "The unprecedented global epidemic of overweight and obesity is a profound tragedy and a monumental societal failure," said lead author Professor Emmanuela Gaki-

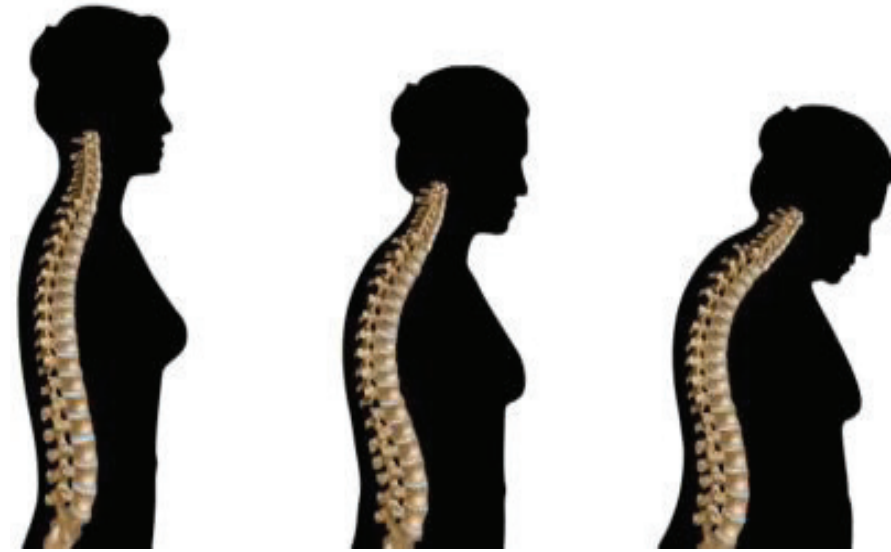
dou from the Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation (IHME), University of Washington, US. "Governments and the public health community can use our country-specific estimates on the stage, timing, and speed of current and forecasted transitions in weight to identify priority populations experiencing the greatest burdens of obesity who require immediate intervention and treatment, and those that remain predominantly overweight and should be primarily targeted with prevention strategies," said Gakidou. During an address in the 119th Episode of 'Mann Ki Baat', Prime Minister Narendra Modi discussed rising cases of obesity and the need to prevent it as it can lead to several diseases like hypertension, diabetes and cancer. "To become a fit and

healthy nation, we will certainly have to deal with the problem of obesity. According to a study, one in every eight people today is troubled by the problem of obesity," PM Modi emphasised. The latest findings underscore the imperative for immediate action to prevent an unprecedented global epidemic of overweight and obesity. Without urgent policy reform and action, over half the world's adult population (3.8 billion) and a third of all children and adolescents (746 million) are forecast to be living with overweight or obesity by 2050 – posing an unparalleled threat of premature disease and death at local, national, and global levels. The study predicts a substantial (121 per cent) rise in obesity among young people globally, with the total number of children and adolescents with obesity predicted to reach 360 million by 2050 (an additional 186 million from 2021). The substantial increases in obesity forecast between 2022 and 2030, underscore the urgent need for action.

Celltrion's bone disease biosimilars get approval in US

AGENCIES
SEOUL

Celltrion, a major South Korean biopharmaceutical firm, said on Tuesday its two new bio-similars for bone disease treatment have obtained approval from the United States. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approved Celltrion's Stoboclo and Osenvelt, biosimilar drugs to Prolia and Xgeva, respectively, in the form of subcutaneous formulations for sales in the US market, the company said in a press release, Yonhap news agency reported. The global market for Prolia and Xgeva was estimated to have reached a combined 9.2 trillion won (\$6.6 billion) last year, it said. The U.S. accounted for 6.15 trillion won, or 67 percent, of the two original drugs' sales last year. Last month, Celltrion obtained approval from the FDA for U.S. sale of Avtozma, an autoim-



mune disease biosimilar to Actemra, in both intravenous and subcutaneous formulations. The Korean drugmaker earlier to commercialise 22 biosimilar products by 2030, up from the current 11. Meanwhile, Celltrion's fourth-quarter net profit skyrocketed from a year earlier on robust sales of bio-similar medicines and the merger with its health care affiliate. Net profit for the three

months ended on Dec. 31 soared to 235.6 billion won (\$164.7 million) from 453 million won during the same period of 2023, the company said in a regulatory filing. "The net result got a boost from sharply increased sales of our biosimilar products, including Remsima, Truxima and Herzuma, in advanced markets and hefty cost reduction following the merger with Celltrion Healthcare in

late 2023," a company spokesperson said. Remsima is a treatment for Crohn's disease and other autoimmune diseases, while Truxima and Herzuma are for anti-cancer treatment. Operating profit also jumped over 10-fold to 196.4 billion won in the fourth quarter from 18.4 billion won a year ago. Sales nearly tripled to 1.06 trillion won from 382.6 billion won over the same period.

A plastic spoon's worth of plastic is inside your brain, warns study

AGENCIES
ONTARIO

A plastic spoon's worth of plastic is inside your brain, researchers warned on Tuesday, showing alarming new evidence about microplastic accumulation in human brain tissue. Published in the journal Brain Medicine, the research revealed that human brains contain approximately a spoon's worth of microplastics and nanoplastics (MNP), with levels 3-5 times higher in individuals with documented dementia diagnoses. More concerning still, brain tissues showed 7-30 times higher concentrations of MNPs compared to other organs like the liver

or kidney. "The dramatic increase in brain microplastic concentrations over just eight years, from 2016 to 2024, is particularly alarming," said Dr Nicholas Fabiano from the University of Ottawa's Department of Psychiatry and lead author of the commentary. "This rise mirrors the exponential increase we're seeing in environmental microplastic levels," he mentioned. Of particular concern are particles smaller than 200 nanometers, predominantly composed of polyethylene, which show notable deposition in cerebrovascular walls and immune cells. This size allows them

to potentially cross the blood-brain barrier, raising questions about their role in neurological conditions. The commentary said that switching from bottled to filtered tap water alone could reduce microplastic intake from 90,000 to 4,000 particles per year. "Bottled water alone can expose people to nearly as many microplastic particles annually as all ingested and inhaled sources combined," said Dr Brandon Luu, an Internal Medicine Resident at the University of Toronto. Switching to tap water could reduce this exposure by almost 90 per cent, making it one of the

simplest ways to cut down on microplastic intake. Other significant sources include plastic tea bags, which can release millions of micro and nano-sized particles per brewing session. Heating food in plastic containers – especially in the microwave – can release substantial amounts of microplastics and nanoplastics, said researchers. "Avoiding plastic food storage and using glass or stainless-steel alternatives is a small but meaningful step in limiting exposure. While these changes make sense, we still need research to confirm whether lowering intake leads to reduced accumulation in human tissues," said Dr Luu.

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI

Obesity is not solely determined by genetics but is closely linked to health and lifestyle choices, health experts said on Tuesday, emphasising that it is a serious health issue and not just a cosmetic concern. On the occasion of World Obesity Day, Dr Nikhil Tandon, Head of the Department of Endocrinology and Metabolism at All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), New Delhi, explained that circadian rhythm disorders, poor eating habits, sedentary lifestyles, and stress from work and society are major contributors to rising obesity rates in India. Speaking at an ASSOCHAM interactive session on "Obesity and its Adverse Impact on Health" here, he noted that "adult obesity is on the increase and stressed



the importance of education, awareness, and open conversations to address the crisis." He also pointed out that childhood obesity in India is increasing. According to Anil Rajput, Chairperson, ASSOCHAM National Council on CSR, obesity is a concern that is being addressed at various levels in our country. The government has launched several initiatives like FIT India, Eat Right India, Poshan Abhiyan and Khelo India to

ensure that people consume a balanced diet and lead an active life. "Individuals too are increasingly becoming more health conscious and I am certain that in times to come as a result of these collective efforts, India will become an even more productive nation and gallop up towards our goal of a Viksit Bharat by 2047," said Rajput. During an address in the 119th Episode of 'Mann Ki Baat', Prime Minister Narendra Modi discussed rising cases of obesity and

the need to prevent it as it can lead to several diseases like hypertension, diabetes and cancer. "To become a fit and healthy nation, we will certainly have to deal with the problem of obesity. According to a study, one in every eight people today is troubled by the problem of obesity," PM Modi emphasised. According to Dr Sudhir Kalhan, Chairman, Institute of Minimal Access, Metabolic and Bariatric Surgery, Sir Ganga Ram Hospital, New Delhi, with sedentary lifestyles, imbalance diets, and genetic predispositions, obesity rates are soaring, leading to diabetes, hypertension, and heart diseases. "As a bariatric surgeon, I witness the devastating impact daily. The need for awareness and preventive measures has become urgent. Simple steps like balanced diets, regular exercise, and timely medical intervention can curb Obesity," he stressed.



Ahmedabad Open golf: Sri Lankan N Thangaraja takes round one lead

AGENCIES

AHMEDABAD, MAR 4 (UND)

Sri Lankan N Thangaraja took the round one lead by firing a brilliant seven-under 65 at the Ahmedabad Open being played at the Kensville Golf & Country Club here on Tuesday.

Italy's Michele Ortolani was second at four-under 68. The Delhi duo of Anshul Kabthiyal and Kapil Kumar and Chandigarh's Harendra Gupta were tied for the third position with two-under 70.

N Thangaraja, who finished third at last week's PGTI event in Raipur, continued his good form on Tuesday. Starting from the 10th tee, Thangaraja collected an eagle and two birdies at the expense of a bogey on the back-nine.

'The moments you dream of' says Shane Watson on Champions Trophy knockouts

AGENCIES

DUBAI, MAR 4 (UND)

Champions Trophy winner Shane Watson concedes that the tournament continues to create special memories - and that even special ones await with the semi-finals and the final set to be played this week.

Watson was part of the Australia squad that won the competition in 2006 and 2009 - and he describes that first victory as the biggest moment of his career.

"I was always a confident person, all athletes are, but it was in 2006 that I really knew I had the skill to perform for my country and help them win - and that is a different confidence, it's a different feeling," he said ahead of the semi-finals, according to the ICC.

Khelo India Winter Games 2025 to begin in Gulmarg from March 9

AGENCIES

SRINAGAR, MAR 5 (UND)

The picturesque ski resort of Gulmarg in Jammu and Kashmir is all set to host the second leg of the Khelo India Winter Games 2025 (KIWG) from March 9 to 12.

The event, originally scheduled from February 22 to 25, had to be postponed due to a lack of snow in Gulmarg. However, the recent snowfall has set the perfect stage for the much-anticipated winter games.

"Gulmarg is ready! With



fresh snowfall and full preparedness, the J&K administration and Sports Council are set to host the 2nd leg of #KIWG2025 from

9th to 12th March. A world-class winter experience awaits!," J&K Sports Council said in a statement. Over one thousand ath-

letes, coaches & officials are expected to participate in the four snow sports events including- ski mountaineering, alpine skiing, snowboard, and Nordic skiing.

The Union Territory of Ladakh hosted the first phase of the Khelo India Winter Games (KIWG) 2025 from January 23-27, 2025. The games were held at the NDS Stadium in Leh, the capital of Ladakh.

Ladakh topped the medal tally and the Indian Army retained the men's ice hockey.

Excited athletes eagerly waiting to participate

AGENCIES

SRINAGAR, MAR 5 (UND)

The picturesque ski resort of Gulmarg is all set to host the Khelo India Winter Games (KIWG) with the athletes excited and eagerly waiting to participate in the mega event.

Gulmarg has transformed into a winter wonderland following recent heavy snowfall, prompting authorities to reschedule the mega event to March 9. Around 1,000 athletes from across India will compete in various winter games.

The athletes are excited and eagerly waiting for the

four-day mega event which was earlier postponed due to insufficient snowfall at the Gulmarg which now boasts ideal conditions for the thrilling competitions.

The Athletes have already started training on different slopes, gearing up for intense snow sports events including- ski mountaineering, alpine skiing, snowboard, and Nordic skiing.

Many athletes expressed joy and relief after the official confirmation of the event as their spirits are high, and they are ready to showcase their skills on the snow-covered slopes of

Gulmarg.

An athlete Rajesh Punia from Mumbai was excited after seeing the heaps of snow on the slopes of Gulmarg.

"We were disappointed when the dates for the commencement of the Khelo Games were postponed earlier due to insufficient snow at Gulmarg. The recent heavy snowfall not only has ignited a new passion in the athletes but also brought more ski lovers to the wonder land Gulmarg," he said.

"I am quite happy that the event is now happening" a local athlete Shabir

Ahmad said and added "that after the fresh snowfall the athletes are enjoying practicing on the slopes to prepare for the main event".

Zahoor, another local athlete while expressing happiness said that "it is a great opportunity for all the athletes of the country who are participating in the event to showcase their talent".

Naima, a local athlete also expressed happiness about the commencement of winter games at Gulmarg and hoped that she would also win a medal during the event.

Block Level Volleyball Competition Commenced at Girls High School, Manjakote Rajouri

AGENCIES

RAJOURI, MAR 5

The Indian Army's has kicked off the Inter Village Volleyball Championship at Manjakote, Rajouri District. Twelve teams from Manjakote block are competing for the Champion's Trophy in this two-day tournament. This event is about more than just sports - it's about engaging youth, promoting brotherhood, and instilling sportsmanship. By providing a platform for young athletes, Indian Army is helping them to develop valuable skills and stay away from negative influences. The championship strengthens the bond between the Indian Army and the local population, building



trust, cooperation, and goodwill.

The event has generated immense enthusiasm, with villagers, community leaders, and sports enthusiasts gathering to support the teams. The thrilling final match of the Inter Village Volleyball

Championship was contested between Saroola Strikers and Hayatpura. Initially slated as a best-of-five sets match, Saroola Strikers dominated the competition, defeating Hayatpura in the first three sets to emerge victorious. Through this event,

the Indian Army strengthens its bond with the local community and promotes a spirit of friendship and brotherhood. The championship is a testament to the Army's dedication to the welfare and development of the people of Rajouri district.

ICC rankings: Omarzai becomes no. 1 all-rounder, Gill remains top ODI batter

AGENCIES

DUBAI, MARCH 5

Afghanistan's rising star Azmatullah Omarzai has capped off a stellar ICC Champions Trophy campaign by reaching the summit of the ICC ODI all-rounder rankings.

At just 25, Omarzai has dethroned his own teammate, veteran Mohammad Nabi, to claim the No. 1 spot, highlighting his meteoric rise on the international stage.

Omarzai's all-round brilliance in the Champions Trophy, which included a maiden five-wicket haul against England and



a crucial fifty against Australia, propelled him to the top with a career-high 296 rating points. His impact wasn't limited to the all-rounder charts—he also surged 12 places in the batting rankings to No. 24 after scoring 126 runs in

the tournament.

India's Axar Patel was another notable riser in the all-rounder category, leaping 17 spots to 13th, registering a career-best 194 rating points.

India opener Shubman Gill remains in No.1 rank-

ing for ODI batters, with teammate Virat Kohli moving up to fourth following his Player of the Match heroics against Australia in the Champions Trophy semi-final in Dubai.

The latest ICC rankings update also saw significant movement among batters. Afghanistan's Ibrahim Zadran, who hammered a sensational 177 against England in Lahore, climbed 13 spots to break into the top 10 at No. 10 (676 rating points). Another high profile veteran, Kiwi Kane Williamson, also made a move, climbing eight spots to 29th.

Steve Smith announces retirement from ODI cricket



AGENCIES

SYDNEY, MAR 5 (UND)

In the aftermath of Australia's Champions Trophy exit, stand-in captain Steve Smith has announced his retirement from the ODI format. The two-time ICC Men's Cricket World Cup winner will continue to play Test and T20I cricket for Australia, but his side's narrow loss to India in the Champions Trophy semi-finals on Tuesday was the last 50-over contest he will feature in for his country, an ICC report said.

"It has been a great ride and I have loved every minute of it," Smith said via a statement from Cricket Australia on Wednesday.

"There have been so many amazing times and wonderful memories. Winning two World Cups was a great highlight along with the many fantastic team-mates who shared the journey."

Opening up on his decision, Smith said that it was the perfect time for new faces to step up in the ODI format.

"Now is a great opportunity for people to start preparing for the 2027 World Cup so it feels like the right time to make way," he added.

On his own future with the national team, Smith added, "Test cricket remains a priority and I am really looking forward to the World Test Championship Final, the West Indies in the winter and then England at home. I feel I still have a lot to contribute on that stage."

Smith, who featured in 170 ODIs for Australia, scored 5800 runs at 43.28 including 12 centuries and 35 half centuries while also registering 28 wickets to his name.

The batter was also an integral member of Australia's Cricket World Cup winning sides in 2015 and 2023.

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