



Pilgrim-Centric Facilities Inaugurated at Darshani Deodi, Banganga and Adhkuwari

Lieutenant Governor chairs 74th Meeting of Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board

■ HT News Network

JAMMU, MARCH 06: Lieutenant Governor Shri Manoj Sinha chaired the 74th Meeting of Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board (SMVDSB), at Raj Bhawan, today.

The meeting was attended by Members of the Board- Mahamandleshwar Swami Vishveshvaranand Giri Maharaj, Shri Baleshwar Rai, Dr Ashok Bhan, Dr Neelam Sareen, Shri K.K Sharma, Shri Suresh Kumar Sharma and Shri Raghu K. Mehta.

Dr Mandeeep K. Bhandari, Principal Secretary to

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BUDGET SESSION-2025

CM Omar Abdullah reaffirms commitment to fulfill all his promises in five years

Says Termination Process Of Employees Should Stop, Will Rectify It

■ HT News Network

JAMMU, MARCH 06: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah today promised to fulfill the manifesto that his party has committed to the people of Jammu and Kashmir during his five-year tenure.

"I would like to say something about our manifesto. Why did we come to the manifesto? We prepared the manifesto with lot of thought. It is

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'July 13 Martyrs' sacrifices can't be erased: CM Omar Abdullah

■ HT News Network

Jammu, Mar 06: Asserting that sacrifices of "July 13 Martyrs" cannot be erased, Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Thursday, said that late Sheikh Mohammad

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Budget Session-2025

Question Hour in LA

3 Solid Waste Management Plants approved for Dooru-Verinag : Sakeena Itoo

■ HT News Network



JAMMU, MARCH 06: Minister for Social Welfare, Sakeena Itoo, today informed the House that the Municipal Committee Dooru/Verinag distributes twin household dustbins among all households to segregate waste at the source, along with installation of twin bins in commercial areas for segregated collection of garbage in twin towns of Anantnag district.

The Minister was replying on behalf of Chief Minister, Omar Abdullah, to a question raised by G A Mir in the Legislative Assembly.

The Minister said that for collection of waste from the households and commercial establishments, 08 Hoppers are deployed regularly and the waste is subsequently transported to the Material Recovery Facility Plant at Verinag, where it is further segregated into dry waste and wet waste separately. The dry waste is processed in the MRF center which is then recycled and sold out, while the wet waste is put into the compost pits for generation of organic compost.

The Minister informed that 8 hoppers, 25 tri-cycles and one truck laden with sucker have been procured for Dooru and Verinag while as the department intends to procure machinery including weight bridge, baling machine and shredder for improvement in sanitation and waste management segregation.

The Minister, while replying to a supplementary, stated that three Solid Waste Management Plants of 4 TPD

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Rs 583.78 lakh DPR formulated for Kalaran Bheeni Nalla bridge: Dy CM

■ HT News Network

Jammu, Mar 06: Deputy Chief Minister, Surinder Kumar Choudhary, today informed the House that a comprehensive DPR has been formulated for construction of bridge over Bheeni Nallah at Kalaran, Nangla Dull road in Bani worth Rs 583.78 lakh.

The Deputy Chief Minister was responding to a question raised by MLA, Dr. Rameshwar Singh.

He said that DPR for construction of 75 m span bridge with

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Measures underway to protect vulnerable spots along Jehlum: Javed Rana

■ HT News Network

Jammu, Mar 06: Minister for Jal Shakti, Javed Ahmad Rana, today informed the House that crate protection works are being undertaken under Flood Management Project Phase-II along river Jehlum, wherever required.

He was replying to a question raised by Peerzada Mohammad Syed in the Legislative Assembly.

The Minister stated that crate protection works are being under-

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In 5yrs J&K gets 1984 industrial units, ₹9,606 cr investment 63,710 jobs created since 2019

■ HT News Network

Jammu, Mar 06: Jammu and Kashmir has seen a surge in industrial expansion, with 1,984 new units coming up since 2019, generating 63,710 jobs and attracting ₹9,606.46 crore investments.

According to the official document, accessed by the news agency—, 334 new industrial units were established in FY 2024-25 alone, with an investment of

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Article 370 is a closed chapter: Sunil Sharma

"Will not allow any innocent civilian to die in violence; Entire politics of Kashmir revolving around BJP"

■ HT News Network

Jammu, Mar 05: Jammu, Mar 06 Leader of Opposition Sunil Sharma on Thursday said that Article 370 is a "closed chapter" and "history." He said that the BJP will not allow any innocent civilian to die in violence in Kashmir. Speaking during the discussion on the Lieutenant Governor's address, Sharma, as per news agency— reiterated that Article 370 is a "closed chapter." "The Parliament as well as the Supreme Court has settled the



issue of Article 370 forever," he said, adding that those raking up the Article 370 issue want to keep Jinnah's two-nation theory alive. He said that dialogue with Pakistan is the domain of the Ministry of External Affairs. "Some people here advocated dialogue with Pakistan, but they should understand it is not the domain of the Assembly. The MEA knows when to hold talks with Pakistan," he said. Sharma also stated that entire Kashmir politics is now revolving around the BJP, with parties blaming each other for being their proxies—(KNO)

J&K budget returns home

After hiatus of 7 years, CM Omar Abdullah to unveil annual financial statement of UT in Assembly today

■ HT News Network

Jammu Mar 06: After a gap of seven years, Jammu & Kashmir's annual budget for 2025-26 will be presented in the Legislative Assembly on Friday by Chief Minister Omar Abdullah, who is also serving as finance minister of the Union Territory.

As per the news agency—, J&K's annual financial statement of expenditure for 2025-26 and the supplementary statement of expenditure for 2024-25 will be presented in the House by Omar

Abdullah tomorrow after the conclusion of question hour.

This will be for the first time since 2018 that the budget of J&K will be presented in the Assembly. After imposition of central rule in Jammu & Kashmir in 2018, the budget documents of the UT were tabled annually in the Parliament by the Union Finance Minister. It is for the first time in history that the CM would unveil the budget in the Assembly.

Already reported, the cabinet gave its go-ahead to the budget

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Schools Across Kashmir Valley to Open Today after Winter Vacation

■ HT News Network

Srinagar, Mar 06: Schools in Kashmir division are all set to reopen on Friday following a winter vacation of more than 87 days.

An official said that more than ten thousand private and government employees will resume their academic activities from Friday.

According to the news agency—, the schools in Kashmir were scheduled to reopen on March-01 but due to the inclement weather, authorities extended the vacations by a week.

The government on December-06 had announced winter vacation for all public and recognised private educational institutions in the Kashmir division as well as in the winter zones of Jammu division in two phases starting

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Terrorism, drug peddling grave threats: DGP Prabhat

'Rome was not built in a day, all battles will be won eventually'

■ HT News Network

Jammu, Mar 06: Terming terrorism and drug peddling as equally grave threats to the society Director General of Police (DGP) J&K Nalin Prabhat on Thursday said that he would rate fight against drugs and fight against terrorism on equal pedestal.

Speaking at Thana Diwas here the DGP, according to the news agency— Kashmir News Observer (KNO) said, "Drugs are reaching here through western borders. The entire narcotics racket is managed by Pakistan Army and ISI through different tanzems (outfits) and through smugglers. This is a challenge



and J&K Police will keep on fighting with it till the battle is won."

He said that he equates war against drugs at an "equal pedestal" with war against terrorism. "Both the wars are on." He expressed concern over school going children getting involved in drug trade. "It's unfortunate that even school children, in uniform, are found selling small bags of drugs and other contraband substances. It's the duty of the parents to keep a vigil at the activities of their children," the DGP added.

He said that a major manpower optimization drive has been initiated to improve resource allocation. "There is a saying that

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CS asks Tourism deptt to come up with comprehensive Homestay policy within a month

Deptt in process of developing one stop app for all stakeholders

■ HT News Network

JAMMU, MARCH 6: Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo, today chaired a meeting of Tourism Department attended by the MD J&K Bank and other concerned officers to take appraisal of measures being taken by the Department for identifying the gaps, policy updates and scope for improvements to strengthen the homestays for overall promotion of tourism sector in J&K.

The Chief Secretary impressed upon the department to come-up with a comprehensive policy for development of Home-



stays across districts of the UT. He called upon them to prepare the document in

next one month after having consultations with all the stakeholders.

He underscored the need for developing a new loan product by the financial institutions which would encompass every activity that could be done to promote the homestays in the region. He advised for exploring option for increasing the number of rooms that could be converted into homestay besides the quantum of finance that could be secured for the construction and upgradation of homestays.

Dulloo emphasized that the ambit of this scheme should be widened to accommodate the

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Martyrs' Day' Row

Cong leaders urge restraint, call for using responsible language

■ HT News Network

Jammu, Mar 06:— Following the controversial remarks on "Martyrs Day" by the Leader of the Opposition (LOP) and senior BJP leader Sunil Sharma, senior Congress leaders on Thursday urged politicians to be 'responsible' and avoid using derogatory words.

JKPCC president Tariq Hammed Karra, as per the news agency—, while speaking to the reporters here asked the leaders to focus on pressing public issues rather than engaging in divisive debates over historical events.

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CONTINUE FROM FRONT PAGE.....

SAKINAITOO

each have been approved for MC Dooru-Verinag. Besides, one Solid Waste Management Plant of 4 TPD is functional at Veering where the dry waste is processed at MRF facility and the wet waste is processed through pit composting method, she added.

She said that the Municipal Committee is committed towards ensuring efficient waste management practices through continuous improvements in segregation methods. Efforts are being made to enhance citizen participation, upgrade infrastructure and adopt innovative solutions for waste processing, she added.

The Minister further said that under SBM (U) scientific processing of the Municipal Solid Waste in the small and medium Towns of J&K has been undertaken. She said that the establishment of 78 Solid Waste Management centers (WMCs)/Material recovery Facility (MRF) along with compost pits has been approved. She added that construction work in 52 locations has been undertaken, of which, 33 Waste Management Centers/MRFs and 30 compost pits have been completed, while the work in 19 more sites of WMCs/MRF and 22 compost pits is under progress.

Further, she informed that bio-remediation of legacy waste at the dumping sites like Bhagwati Nagar, Kathua, Samba, Udhampur, Tral, Bijbehara, Pahalgam, Anantnag and Tangmarg has been completed and 3.88 lakh MT legacy waste has been bio-remediated. She apprised that the work has been awarded for bio-remediation of 6.16 lakh MT legacy waste at Kot Bhalwal by JMC, 2.98 lakh MT by DULBK and 1.20 lakh MT for 7 ULBs of DULBJ. Besides, the tender has been floated for bio-remediation of 11.00 lakh MT legacy waste at Achan, Srinagar, she added.

Regarding housing facilities, the Minister said that PMAY-Urban 2.0 has been launched in September 2024 to address the housing needs of EWS/LIG and MIG Income categories by providing financial assistance for construction/purchase of houses through different verticals of the scheme in the next 5 years. She informed that Rs 907.68 lakh have been released to the beneficiaries for construction of houses since 2018 in Dooru and Verinag. Out of 747 sanctioned houses, 505 houses have been completed while 161 are under-construction as per the CS&MC data of MoHUA Government of India, she added.

LG

Chief Executive Officer, SMVDSB also attended the meeting.

The Board, which met under the chairmanship of Hon'ble Lieutenant Governor held comprehensive review of its past decisions, ratified the actions taken after its last meeting and took several new decisions against 20 key Agenda Items having far reaching implications for functioning of the Board and augmenting pilgrim services.

Important decisions were taken in respect of new and underway projects of the Board such as construction of Exit Track & Remodelling of Manokamana area at Bhawan (a part of the Master Plan for Bhawan area), development of helipad in collaboration with Shri Shiv Khori Shrine Board in village Hutt at Katra, New Vaishnavi Bhawan at Bhawan, Cottages (near Sports Stadium), Katra, Widening of Yatra track from Sanjichhat to Bhawan and operationalization of Medical College of the Board at Kakryal.

To cater to the substantial increase in foot-fall at Bhairon Ji Temple following the installation of the Passenger Ropeway in the year-2019, the Board concurred with the re-development of the Bhairon Ji Temple Complex to address key concerns, including the implementation of an efficient queue management system, provision of locker facilities and additional washrooms. The project seeks to facilitate simultaneous darshans, reduce turnaround times and enhance the overall pilgrim experience, ensuring seamless crowd management. The project is slated for completion within 12 months. The Board approved an amnesty scheme to settle long-standing litigation matters with shop licensees, providing a one-time opportunity for resolution.

The meeting also reviewed the implementation of the Annual Green Plan of the Board for the current year and approved the Annual Green Plan for the year 2025-26.

The Lieutenant Governor directed the CEO SMVDSB to conduct a thorough evaluation of the existing Sewage Treatment Plants (STPs) across the Shrine Board's premises to assess their adequacy in handling the generated sewage and necessary measures be taken to augment STP capacities.

He further directed to explore targeted initiatives to increase reliance on renewable sources of energy especially solar power to the extent feasible in the area of the Shrine.

The Lieutenant Governor also emphasised on implementation of robust feedback mechanism for fostering continuous improvement in the services provided by the Shrine Board.

He lauded the important contribution of Board Members in the last three years since the Board was reconstituted. He said, the pro-active association and continuous guidance by the Members were instrumental in taking the Board's reputation to newer hori-

zons.

The Board took appraisal of peripheral institutions under the SMVD Charitable Society including Gurukul, Hospital, Sports Complex, College of Nursing, Medical College and approved grants-in-aid and financial assistance to support their functioning. The Board also discussed several measures for expeditious completion of the Shankaracharya Temple project in collaboration with local stakeholders.

The Board observed that Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine has seen a consistent surge in devotees with the annual pilgrimage exceeding 90 lakh for the third consecutive year, reaching an impressive 95 lakh last year. The significant growth attributed to the dedication of major projects in the Bhawan area including Durga Bhawan with Tripti Bhoj-analya, Skywalk, Remodelled Parvati Bhawan and Atka Area. Furthermore, the expansion of facilities and amenities in Katra and other sectors such as the Queue Complex at Darshani Deodi, YRC at Railway Station, holding area at Adhkuwari, pilgrims cum employees' accommodation and the establishment of Prasad Kendras have also contributed to this growth. The provision of free Langars, medical facilities, facilitating senior citizens and divyang and Arti & Poojan facilities, coupled with eco-friendly and digital initiatives has significantly enhanced the pilgrimage experience.

On the sidelines of the meeting, the Lieutenant Governor inaugurated several pilgrim-centric facilities including the Queue Complex at Darshani Deodi, Banganga and the Holding Area at Adhkuwari. The Queue Complex provides shelter during all weather conditions and streamlines devotee movement. Meanwhile, the Holding Area at Adhkuwari reduces congestion and waiting times, improves crowd management, safety and ensures a smoother movement of pilgrims towards the sanctum sanctorum.

On the occasion, 50gm and 100gm Silver Coins were also launched, adding to the diverse facilities available to pilgrims. Notably, the Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board had previously developed gold and silver coins in various denominations featuring an inscription of Goddess Mata Vaishno Devi Ji, ensuring guaranteed purity.

Earlier, Sh Anshul Garg, CEO, SMVDSB gave a detailed presentation on varied activities of the Shrine Board and the action taken with regard to the implementation of various decisions of the previous meetings of the Board.

CM

our promise to the people of Jammu and Kashmir. When we presented this manifesto to the people, we said, we are asking for a five-year term. During this five-year term, we will do all these things and present ourselves to you. Today, I would like to tell the people of Jammu and Kashmir that whatever we have said in our manifesto, in the coming five years, we will do all these things," the Chief Minister stated.

Omar Abdullah was replying to the motion of thanks on the Lieutenant Governor's Address in the J&K Legislative Assembly.

Starting his speech, the Chief Minister, who is also Leader of the House, emphasized that the LG's address sought to highlight the Government's intentions and priorities.

"Many of the members have come to a conclusion about what was missing in LG's address. The Government does not work only from one address to another. The Government continues for five years. Four months ago, in front of this very House, LG presented his address. It is not necessary to repeat what was said four months ago. This address is in continuation to that and in addition to that. This address does not replace the one from four months ago but it adds to it. So, the members who are trying to create the impression that we are suddenly silent about some things, or that we did not mention some things are trying to find faults, he said.

He further added, "The intention was to start from there. In this, we added more. Next year, I hope, we will be with the Governor at that time. When the Governor will be with us, we will add more. And we will continue to do this for five years. We made the address concise this time and kept the rest for the later. So, there is no such thing that we are pulling out of our agenda or want to remain silent on something."

The Chief Minister also responded to questions raised by various members in the House, saying, "Many people from this side (treasury benches) and from the opposition benches, have raised some questions. Some things have been responded and the discussion would continue with the budget speech tomorrow. "After that, we will start the discussion on the budget. And in the coming days, we will give our answers to all the issues that the honourable members have touched upon."

Speaking on the Public Safety Act (PSA), Abdullah emphasized that preventive detention should not be used as a substitute to legal prosecution. "Now, I would like to talk about the PSA. I do not want to get into politics here. Otherwise, a lot can be said about the PSA. In 2016, PSA was slapped, and then amnesty was announced for such cases but not carried forward. We all know how the termination

process started in the previous regime. But it should stop and we will rectify it. We have promised to do it," he said.

"If PSA is your weapon, then your case is weak. If you keep these people in jail for years and do not prosecute them, it means you do not have a case against them. You just want to keep them in jail. If you say that they are stone throwers, they are OGWs, then why do you need preventive detention? Preventive detention is needed where you cannot make any other case. You filed a PSA against me because you did not have anything else to detain me."

Speaking on his own detention during the revocation of Article 370 in 2019, the Chief Minister said, "You kept me in confinement for six months on preventive detention. When that time passed, you did not have anything else, so you filed a PSA and detained me for more months. If what you say is true, then instead of PSA, you should file a case and prosecute them."

On the revocation of Article 370 and its consequences and developmental claims of opposition during the discussion, he remarked, "I will not talk much about Article 370, as much was said about it in this august house. I said that we spent time discussing Article 370, but maybe more than that, the opposition side discussed it more."

CM said that opposition was in awe about what has been done by the Central government in terms of development as if they are speaking on the President's Address and not the LG Administration. He said, "I am only asking you one question—tell me, which of these projects were not possible without removing Article 370?"

The Chief Minister challenged the BJP led opposition's position further, asking, "Tell me, which of these development projects were not possible before 2019 and were not possible without removing Article 370?"

On the opposition's remarks, CM said "Where have we disrespected Maharaja? " On the renaming of places, Omar Abdullah questioned, "Pratap Singh Park, is it still Pratap Singh Park? SMGS Hospital, is it still SMGS Hospital? SMHS Hospital, is it still SMHS Hospital? Is there any name changed in the streets when we were in power? Not at all. I don't know not in our tenure. Not in other tenures of PDP and Congress.

But tell me, when we talk about the legacy of Maharaja Hari Singh, what is the biggest thing? One was Jammu and Kashmir State. That State is gone now. Where is the State? What have you done to that State? Tell me. This is something to be said."

Referring to state subject laws, Abdullah highlighted their importance in protecting the rights of the people. "What did the Maharaja leave for us apart from the geography of this region? State subject laws—our land was ours, our jobs were ours. Where are those laws now? What right do you have over your land today? Anyone can take it from you at any time. What right do we have over our jobs?"

JULY

Abdullah's stature was not tied to December 5 holiday.

Speaking during the Motion of Thanks on the Lieutenant Governor's address in the Legislative Assembly, the Chief Minister, according to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), said, "The sacrifices of the martyrs and the contributions of Sher-e-Kashmir remain indelible in the hearts of the people, regardless of political decisions to remove holidays."

"The 22 people who sacrificed their lives on July 13, 1931, did so for a voice, for some rights. If what they did was wrong, why did Maharaja Hari Singh take the steps he did after their sacrifice? Why did he set up the Glancy Commission? Why did he announce elections after that commission? Why did the Praja Sabha come into existence, which eventually became the Jammu and Kashmir Assembly?" Omar asked.

He added, "If the sacrifices of those people led to the formation of this Assembly, can't we at least use respectful words for them? Their only fault was that they were Muslims. Admit that. Because in the rest of the country, where voices were raised against autocracy, no one called them traitors. But here, because they were Muslims and were fighting for democracy, such words come so easily from our mouths."

Omar also addressed the controversy surrounding the holiday on December 5, marking the birth anniversary of Sheikh Abdullah. He revealed that during his previous tenure as the Chief Minister, he had considered abolishing the holiday to reduce the number of public holidays in Jammu and Kashmir.

"If you had asked me, I would have willingly given up that holiday. My colleagues may not remember, but when I was Chief Minister last time, I told my colleagues that I wanted to give up the December 5 holiday. Salaria Sahib is a witness. I said there are too many holidays in Jammu and Kashmir, and I want to reduce them. But if I start cutting other holidays, people will say that you kept your grandfather's holiday and cut the rest. First, remove the Sher-e-Kashmir holiday on December 5, and then we will reduce the other holidays," Omar said.

He added that Sheikh Abdullah's stature is not tied to the December 5 holiday. "What he did for Jammu and Kashmir cannot be erased. Whether you observe July 13 as a holiday or not, whether you observe December 5 as a holiday or not, no one can erase the sacrifices of those people from the hearts of the people here," he said.

CHALLENGES OPPOSITION ON ART 370 REMOVAL

The Chief Minister also addressed the ongoing debate over the abrogation of Article 370. He challenged the opposition to name one development project that could not have been implemented without the removal of Article 370. "Most of the projects you listed were started before 2019. But I won't get into that debate. I am asking you to name one development-related project that was not possible before the removal of Article 370," he said.

Omar also refuted claims that Article 370 was responsible for corruption, nepotism, and terrorism in Jammu and Kashmir. He pointed out that terrorism has not ceased after the abrogation of Article 370, particularly in Jammu. "If Article 370 alone was responsible for terrorism in Jammu and Kashmir, then it should have stopped after its removal. But it did not. So, there is more to it," he said.

CRITICIZES USE OF PUBLIC SAFETY ACT

The Chief Minister criticized the use of the Public Safety Act (PSA) to detain individuals without trial. He argued that if the government has evidence against those detained, they should be prosecuted in court rather than held under preventive detention.

"If you are keeping people in jail for years based solely on the PSA, it means you have no evidence to prosecute them, no case against them. You are simply detaining them under the PSA. If what you say is true—that they are stone-pelters, OGWs (Over Ground Workers), or terrorists—then why do you need preventive detention? Preventive detention is needed when you cannot build a case against someone," Omar said.

EVERYONE SUPPORTS STATEHOOD

The Chief Minister reiterated his commitment to restoring statehood for Jammu and Kashmir. He expressed confidence that all members of the Assembly would support a resolution in favor of statehood if brought to the floor.

"We believe that there is no party or person here who is against statehood. But if Sajad Sahib [Sajad Lone] has doubts that some people are against statehood, bring the resolution. Today, I say that all our members will vote in favor of it," he said.

OUR BUSINESS RULES HAVE BEEN FRAMED

The Chief Minister also highlighted the need for clarity in governance and announced that the Cabinet had approved new business rules to streamline administrative processes. "Last night, around 8 PM, we held a Cabinet meeting, and our business rules have been framed. The Cabinet has approved them, and the approval has been sent to the Lieutenant Governor. We hope that it will be approved so that at least until this system is in place—I am assuming it is temporary—it should function properly," Omar said—(KNO)

SCHOOLS

from December 10.

Winter vacations for Classes upto 5th primary were announced from December-10-2024 to February 28, 2025.

Similarly for the 6th standard to 12th standard, the vacations were announced from December 16 to February 28, 2025.

However, on February-28—a day before the reopening of schools, Education Minister, Sakina Masood Itoo said that winter vacations for all classes in Kashmir schools have been extended till March-6.

Itoo had said, "Keeping in view the prevalent weather conditions, the government has decided to extend the winter vacation for all government and recognised private schools of Kashmir region.

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

Meanwhile, the authorities in Gurez valley had also extended winter vacation for all schools till March-8.

The decision was taken in wake of heavy snowfall, and prevailing weather conditions in the area.

Pertinently, the colleges in Kashmir valley resumed academic activities on February-14 following a fifty days of winter vacations—(KNO)

DGP

charity begins at home, so I have initiated it from myself, by reliving two thirds of my security guards," he said.

The DGP said that "Rome was not built in a day" and all the battles will be won eventually. Referring to the incentivization of the police personnel DGP Prabhat said, "From day one I have said in different meetings that whoever does good work, he will get a good posting." He said, "I have told everyone that do some big work for the country and within one minute you will get the posting you want."—(KNO)

CONG

"Unfortunately, there was use of derogatory words, which brought two sides at loggerheads. Although everyone has the right to put forth his words in a democratic set-up, the use of words should be such that they should not invite any provocation or counter-provocation", he said.

The JKPC chief while reacting to Sharma's statement said, "If we start scratching history like this, it will be very difficult to justify a lot of things to a lot of people."

Karra stressed that the assembly should work towards progress instead of reviving past disputes.

Echoing similar sentiments, senior Congress leader G.A. Mir expressed disappointment over the heated exchanges in the house, which led to opposition members walking out. "Today's objective was to debate and discuss the real issues of the people, but unfortunately, things took a different turn," Mir said.

He lamented that after more than seven years without an elected assembly, leaders should focus on problems like unemployment and public grievances rather than dwelling on historical disputes.

"This house has been formed after seven years. The issues of the people, the concerns of unemployed youth, and other pressing matters should be highlighted. The government should respond to them. That should be our target," Mir said.

The Congress leaders' remarks come amid an escalating political row over the significance of Martyrs' Day. While regional parties uphold its importance, the BJP has consistently questioned its relevance—(KNO)

DYCM

700 m approach road amounting Rs 583.78 lakh has been prepared which is under active consideration of the sanctioning authorities during next financial year, subject to availability of resources.

The Deputy Chief Minister further stated that the grievance, in this regard, had been registered on the web portal of LG Mulaqaat.

IN 5 YEARS

2,977 crore, creating 8,443 jobs.

The document also highlights the impact of the New Central Sector Scheme (NCSS) 2021, which has been fully subscribed. With an outlay of 28,400 crore, the scheme has 971 approved applications, securing 10,471 crore in investments and creating 51,897 jobs—(KNO)

CS

concerns of the people associated with this tourism practice.

The Chief Secretary also urged the Department to make provision for convergence with other schemes like PMEGP, PM Surya Ghar Yojana or other such schemes in the policy for accrual of multiple benefits to the people at grassroots level.

MD and CEO J&K Bank, Amitava Chatterjee, while speaking in the meeting, agreed that there is still scope for refining this loan product to make it more inclusive and attractive for the aspiring population. He also observed that an additional attraction of 1% rebate on the loan could be extended to the customers on prompt repayment of the credit amount.

On the occasion, Commissioner Secretary, Tourism, Yasha Mudgal, reaffirmed that the policy is in its final phase of constitution. She gave out that many of the concerns of the stakeholders had been addressed after consulting them at both Jammu and Srinagar.

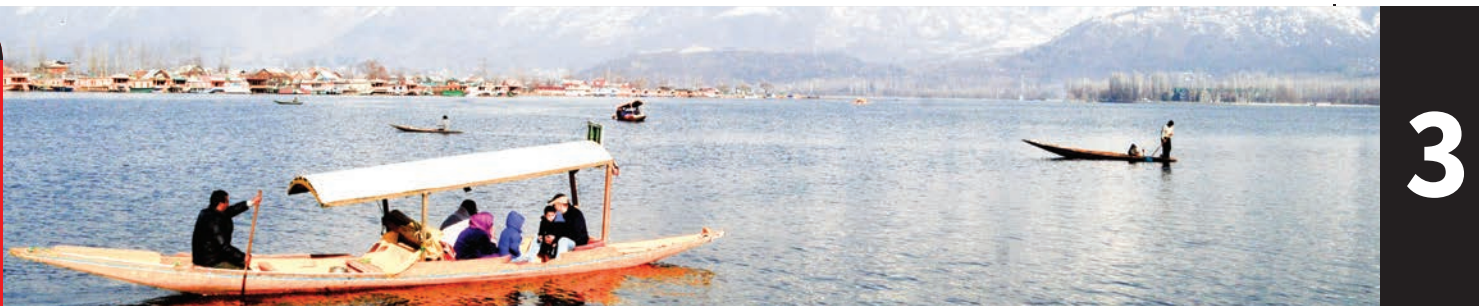
She further said that collaboration with SIDBI, IITM, and other agencies for capacity building of the homestay owners would be carried out under the new policy. It also envisages training on social media branding, digital marketing and geo-tagging besides listing on google maps and travel portals like booking.com, airbnb, NIDHI etc.

It was also given out that the policy envisions lessening the compliance burden on the people interested in taking advantage of homestay scheme. The policy would further promote this scheme provisioning registration of secondary properties under a structured Bed and Breakfast model with many other novel benefits for the effective implementation of this homestay policy across the UT. Later, the Chief Secretary reviewed the progress on development of an extensive app for better user interface, wholesome information and extension of all facilities at one-stop.

He asked for making it a single stop solution for availing different benefits and bringing various services related to both tourists and service providers under one umbrella app. He further advised to make this app more comprehensive and less confusing arranging services related to different stakeholders separately with timely updation of contents reflecting the changes on ground.

Regarding its development through BISAG-N, Yasha Mudgal demonstrated the phases of its development and the progress achieved so far with the help of several slides. She apprised the meeting that this app would be one of the novel ways to promote J&K tourism for it would be more user-friendly and beneficial for both the tourists and tourism players as well.





RDD conducts 2-day capacity-building program for Women-Friendly Panchayats

‘20 Panchayats to be developed as Model Women, Girl-Friendly GPs in J&K’

HT News Network

SRINAGAR/JAMMU MARCH 06: In a significant move towards fostering gender-sensitive governance, the Rural Development Department and Panchayati Raj (RDD&PR), Jammu & Kashmir, successfully conducted a two-day capacity-building program aimed at strengthening Women and Girl-Friendly Panchayats across the Union Territory. The initiative aligns with the national launch of the Model Women-Friendly Gram Panchayat (MWFGP) program, inaugurated by the Ministry of Panchayati Raj in New Delhi on March 5, 2025. The training sessions, held simultaneously in Srinagar and Jammu, were inaugurated by Director RDD Kashmir, Shabir Hussain Bhat and Director RDD Jammu, Mumtaz Ali, along with Director Panchayati Raj, Sham Lal. The program equipped Block Development Officers, Panchayat Inspectors and Panchayat Secretaries with the necessary knowledge and skills to promote safe,



inclusive and gender-responsive governance at the grassroots level. Twenty Panchayats will be developed as Model Women and Girl-Friendly Panchayats, serving as exemplars of gender-sensitive and inclusive governance in Jammu and Kashmir. Director RDD Kashmir, Shabir Hussain Bhat, stressed the importance of fostering a gender-sensitive workplace environ-

ment, where every male employee actively contributes to creating an inclusive and respectful space. He highlighted that gender sensitivity is not just a moral responsibility but a necessity for progress, urging officials to ensure that Panchayats become spaces where women can thrive, contribute, and lead. "In Kashmir, women's participation in Panchayats is unparalleled. However, if

50% of the population women are excluded from development activities, progress becomes impossible. Women play an integral role in decision-making, even within households and their active participation is essential for comprehensive development," he said. Director RDD Jammu, Mumtaz Ali called for a focused approach toward creating child-friendly and women-friendly Panchayats. He further emphasized that on March 8, efforts should be directed towards identifying Panchayats where women's participation is lacking and implementing strategies to empower them. Director Panchayati Raj, Sham Lal, acknowledged the significant progress made by Jammu and Kashmir's Panchayats in promoting gender-sensitive governance but emphasized the need to build upon these achievements. Stressing the importance of continuous improvement, he urged stakeholders to strive for excellence at the national level and set new benchmarks in inclusive rural governance.

Mughal Darbar Bemina Sealed Over Unhygienic Conditions, Expired Food Items

HT News Network

Srinagar, Mar 6, : Authorities on Thursday sealed Mughal Darbar Bemina here in Srinagar after a surprise inspection revealed unhygienic conditions, expired food items, and the illegal use of domestic gas cylinders instead of commercial ones. The crackdown was led by Naib Tehsildar Aleen Ali Sofi, accompanied by police personnel and officials from various departments. During the inspection, officials discovered expired food items, including some with visible fungus, posing serious health risks to customers. The team also found domestic LPG cylinders being misused in place of commercial ones, a violation of safety norms. Following the findings, the eatery and its adjoining bakery shop were immediately sealed. In addition to sealing Mughal Darbar, the team also inspected various shops in the area, instructing vendors to display rate lists and refrain from overcharging customers, particularly during the holy month of Ramadan. Speaking on the occasion, Naib Tehsildar Aleen Ali Sofi warned shopkeepers and vendors against selling food items, fruits, and vegetables at inflated prices. He assured strict action against violators, emphasizing that authorities will continue market inspections to prevent any exploitation of consumers. [KNT]

Bandipora police attach properties of five Pak-operative terrorists in Aloosa Bandipora

HT News Network

Srinagar Mar 06 (JKNS): Police on Thursday attached properties of five Pakistan based Terrorists in Aloo-sa area of North Kashmir's Bandipora district. An official told news agency JKNS that the attaching land measuring 18 kanal belongs to the five absconding Terrorists including Farooq Ahmad Ganie, Mohd Abdullah Malik, Mohd Yonus Gujjar Turak, Sarfraz Gulkar Turk and Rashid Gujjar all are residents of Aloo-sa Bandipora. He also said that police is committed to curb terrorism in Kashmir and destroy its supporting networks. "More properties will be seized in future in other parts of the district which belong to the absconding terrorists." In this regard case FIR no.33/2022 ,U/S, 121,IPC,2/3E&Mcoact,18,20,39,UA(P)act of PS Bandipora was registered against those involved in the said case—(JKNS)

Burzuhamah Health Facility to be Shifted to Alternate Site Amid ASI Objections, Bureaucratic Delays

HT News Network

Srinagar, Mar 6, : The much-awaited Primary Health Centre (PHC) at Burzuhamah, falling in the jurisdiction of the Hazratbal Assembly Segment remains in limbo as bureaucratic hurdles and objections from the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) have stalled its construction, forcing authorities to consider an alternate site for the project. National Conference legislator from Hazratbal, Salman Ali Sagar raised the issue in the Legislative Assembly today. In response, the Minister In-charge of Health & Medical Education Department revealed that the project was initially approved in 2013-14 under the State Sector Capex Budget with an estimated cost of 179 lakh. However, despite the release of 17 lakh, construction could not proceed as the proposed site falls within ASI jurisdiction.

Itija Mufti Leads Protests Against Remarks on July 13 Martyrs, Demands Apology

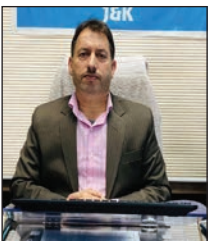
HT News Network

Srinagar, Mar 6, KNT: The Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) on Thursday staged a protest against derogatory remarks made about the July 13 Martyrs during a session in the Legislative Assembly. Led by party leader Itija Mufti, the protest march concluded at Polo View Srinagar. Speaking on the occasion, Itija Mufti emphasized that July 13, 1931, marked the beginning of Jammu & Kashmir's fight for democracy. "The people of J&K made sacrifices for democratic ideals, just as the rest of the country did, the only difference being that their struggle was against a local ruler," she stated. Itija expressed gratitude to Speaker Abdul Rahim Rather for expunging the controversial remarks and demanded an unconditional apology from BJP leader Sunil Sharma. She accused the BJP of distorting historical facts for political gain. "The BJP is trying to manipulate history with a divisive agenda. If they truly revere Maharaja Hari Singh, why did they revoke J&K's state flag, its constitution, and the special status that he had negotiated at the time of accession?" the PDP said in a statement.

MD JJM takes comprehensive review of Jal Jeevan Mission in Jammu & Kashmir

HT News Network

SRINAGAR, MARCH 06: Mission Director, Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM), J&K, Khurshid Ahmad Shah today took a detailed review of implementation of JJM in Jammu & Kashmir through virtual mode. The meeting was attended by Chief Engineer, Jal Shakti (PHE) Department Kashmir and Jammu besides Superintending Engineers Hydraulic circles and Executive Engineers of all divisions including their counterparts of Mechanical Engineering. The Mission Director enquired about the completion of schemes and various components under JJM which have achieved more than 75% progress in each division. The chair was informed that these components will be commissioned. It was also informed that some works have been stalled due to land issues and in some cases the forest department has stopped work inspite of payments already made to the concerned. The MD directed the officers to maintain proper coordination between departments and officials so that stalled works are started soon. Shah also highlighted the discrepancies in scheme completion and Har Ghar Jal reported and certified villages. The meeting was informed that due to prolonged dry weather the supply got reduced which caused the delay in reporting and certifying these villages. It was assured that with recent rains and snow the sources have been replenished and the process of Har Ghar Jal certification will gather pace in coming days.



NIT Srinagar empowers 700 Ladakh youths with MSME entrepreneurship training

HT News Network

Srinagar, Mar 06: A comprehensive two-week Entrepreneurship Awareness Program, designed to ignite entrepreneurial spirit and technological skills among Ladakh's youth, concluded successfully on Wednesday. The program reached over 700 students, connecting them with vital resources and opportunities in the technology sector. Organized by the Department of Mechanical Engineering at NIT Srinagar, in collaboration with NIELIT Leh and the University of Ladakh, the workshop was sponsored by the Ministry of MSME, Government of India. The valedictory session was graced by Dr. Phuntsog Toldhan, Director of NIELIT Ladakh. Prof. Binod Kanaujia, Director NIT Srinagar, served as the Chief Patron for the event. The program focused on equipping participants



with practical skills in high-demand areas, including high-altitude drone piloting, 3D printing, laser engraving, UV printing, IoT, solar energy, robotics, and automation. "This program marks the beginning of a sustained effort by NIT Srinagar to cultivate a technology-driven culture in Ladakh," stated Dr. Dinesh Kumar Rajendran, Nodal Officer of the MSME ESDP Scheme, who highlighted the region's vast potential and the government's commitment to supporting aspiring entrepreneurs. "We aimed to bridge the gap in technical institutions

and empower young individuals to leverage technology for their entrepreneurial ventures," he said. Dr. Dinesh also acknowledged the instrumental support of Director NIT Srinagar, Prof. Binod Kanaujia, Registrar Prof. Atik-ur-Rehman, and Dean Research and Consultancy Prof. Roohie Naaz in making the program possible. Dr. Toldhan said that there is importance of collaboration in fostering technology-based skill development. We are delighted to partner with NIT Srinagar and are exploring future collaborations, including a

high-altitude drone competition, to further benefit the youth and entrepreneurs of Ladakh, he said. Mr. Mushtaq Ahmed, Technical Officer and NIELIT Coordinator, also provided support throughout the entire process. Meanwhile Mr. Mohd Salim, a program coordinator, noted the overwhelming response, with over 2,000 students registered at their center. "We hope this program will inspire more entrepreneurs, building upon the success of emerging ventures like Ladakh Electro Hub and Ladakh Paragliding Adventure, and contribute to the technological advancement of Ladakh," he said. The program was convened by Dr. Phuntsog Toldhan and Dr. Dinesh Kumar Rajendran, with coordination support from Dr. Mehaboob of the University of Ladakh and Mr. Mohamad Salim of NIELIT Leh.

Two-Day National Seminar on ‘Integrating Digital Learning & Technology in Teacher Education’ held at GCOE, Srinagar

HT News Network

SRINAGAR, MARCH 06: The Govt. College of Education (JASE), M.A. Road, Srinagar, organised a two-day National Seminar, sponsored by the Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR), North Western Regional Centre, P.U. Chandigarh. The event was organized under the leadership of Principal GCOE Srinagar, Prof (Dr.) Seema Naz. The seminar, themed 'Integrating Digital Learning and Technology in Teacher Education,' attracted a plethora of distinguished intellectuals and luminaries across India, including Prof (Dr.) Renu Nanda from the PG Department of Education, University of Jammu; Dr. Deepak Bishla, Head Department of IT, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar University; Prof (Dr.) Khurshid Ahmad Mir, Dean Academics and Controller of Exam Cluster University Srinagar; Dr. Sameer Babu M, Associate Professor in Educational Administration, Jamia Millia Islamia New Delhi and Dr. Kajal Kalsi, Assistant Professor Department of Sociology University of Jammu. A host of faculty members from diverse



universities, colleges, and research scholars across the nation attended the seminar both online/offline. Prof (Dr.) Mohammad Mobin, the Vice-Chancellor of Cluster University Srinagar was the chief guest in the Inaugural session. Speaking on the occasion, the chief guest, Prof. (Dr.) Mobin asserted that technology possesses the transformative potential to profoundly alter the landscape of teaching and learning. However, he emphasized that this potential can only

be actualized through deliberate, thoughtful implementation, sustained professional development for educators, and a comprehensive understanding of how to leverage technology in ways that foster student centered, inclusive, and dynamic learning experiences. Earlier, the seminar commenced with a welcome address by Prof (Dr.) Seema Naz, Principal of the host institution, wherein she graciously welcomed the distinguished guests and conveyed her pro-

found gratitude to the chief guest, Prof (Dr.) Mohammad Mobin, and other dignitaries for their esteemed presence. She added that in the AI era, 21st-century skills such as critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, and problem-solving cannot be fully developed without the integration of Information and Communication Technology (ICT). These technologies enable students and educators to create, share, and analyze information in real time, fostering a dynamic and evolving learning environment essential for preparing individuals to succeed in an increasingly digital world. Dr. Nazir Ahmad Bhat, the seminar coordinator, in his backdrop address reiterated that the integration of digital learning and technology in Teacher Education is no longer an option but a necessity in today's rapidly evolving educational landscape. Technology has transformed the way educators deliver content, making it more interactive, engaging, and personalized to cater to diverse learning needs. In his keynote address, Dr. Deepak Bishla underscored the pivotal role that technology plays in reshaping the educational landscape.

EDITORIAL

Limit services of smart city bus services to Srinagar district only

Few days back the Commissioner of Srinagar Municipal Corporation (SMC) Dr. Owais Ahmad issued a statement on which one is forced to laugh. The SMC Commissioner said that the Srinagar smart city bus services would be extended to the other districts of the Kashmir valley. He said that smart city bus service will be operated for Bandipora, Kupwara and other districts of the valley. The statement was not in tune with the position being held by the bureaucrat.

Dr. Owais could have issued this statement only when he was either heading the transport department or the Kashmir division. Since the SMC Commissioner is the head of Srinagar Smart City Limited he is supposed to talk about the facilities being provided to the residents of Srinagar under the smart city project. Providing top class transport facilities to the residents of the city comes under the jurisdiction of the Srinagar Smart City Limited and the officials should pull up their socks in this regard.

The Srinagar smart city buses also known as the red buses are operating in districts other than the Srinagar district. Once these buses operate across the valley then the aim and purpose of starting such bus services would be lost. It is important to upgrade the existing transport infrastructure of the city and enhancing the number of smart city buses would be a great step in this regard. These red buses need to be operated on all the city routes so that the people heave a sigh of relief.

Although most of the city routes have been covered there are many routes that have not been attended to so far. Since the number of buses is limited as on date it should be endeavour of the concerned officers and officials to procure more buses so that the frequency of these buses on a particular route is increased. There is a need to regulate the transport system of Srinagar and the people of the district should have all the modern transport facilities so that the people don't feel neglected.

At the same time it is imperative to regulate the operation of the e-rickshaw service in the Srinagar district. These e-rickshaws need to be operated in the areas and colonies where the public transport is not available. The people living in such areas and colonies are facing huge problems on account of transport. These problems can be solved only when the e-rickshaw services are operated there.

Mann Ki Baat: A Voice Connecting India

Bridging the Gap Between Governance and the Common People

AHMED FAYYAZ

Mann Ki Baat, Prime Minister Narendra Modi's monthly radio program, has emerged as a powerful medium for direct communication with Indian citizens. Launched on October 3, 2014, it serves as a bridge between the government and the people, addressing grassroots issues, inspiring social change, and recognizing everyday heroes. Over the years, it has evolved from a simple radio broadcast into a national movement, influencing millions and shaping India's developmental journey. One of Mann Ki Baat's defining features is its focus on ordinary citizens and their contributions to society. The program regularly highlights stories of unsung heroes—farmers adopting innovative techniques, teachers transforming education, environmentalists working towards sustainability, and social workers making a difference in their communities. Public participation is at the heart of Mann Ki Baat. Citizens are encouraged to share their thoughts, ideas, and experiences via phone calls, letters, and social media. Selected stories are featured in the broadcast, making people feel heard and valued. This interactive approach fosters a sense of collective responsibility, motivating individuals to take small but impactful steps toward social change. The program covers a wide range of topics relevant to everyday life, including cleanliness and sanitation, health and wellness, water conservation, education and innovation, and environmental sustainability. These discussions have helped turn government initiatives into mass movements. For example, campaigns like "Selfie with Daughter" promoted gender equality, while discussions on digital payments accelerated the adoption of Digital India. Radio was chosen as the medium for Mann Ki Baat because of its extensive reach, especially in rural and remote areas where television and the internet may not be widely accessible. Today, the program is broadcasted in 23 Indian lan-



guages, 29 dialects, and 11 foreign languages, making it accessible to a diverse audience. It is aired on All India Radio, DD National, and DD News, and also streamed on YouTube and social media, expanding its reach even further. Over the years, Mann Ki Baat has transformed into a platform for national dialogue and social transformation. The early years focused on promoting government schemes and recognizing local changemakers. As the program's reach expanded, it sparked mass movements like "Har Ghar Tiranga" and boosted participation in social campaigns. The program also leveraged digital platforms, utilizing social media and television broadcasts for a wider impact. In April 2023, Mann Ki Baat celebrated its 100th episode, marking a milestone in its journey. A special book titled Igniting Collective

Goodness: Mann Ki Baat @100 was released, analysing the program's transformational impact on Indian society. According to reports, the program has reached over 1.47 billion cumulative viewers across platforms. A survey conducted by the Indian Institute of Management, Rohtak, found that 73% of respondents believe the program has inspired positive social change, while 70% felt that it effectively addresses issues relevant to the common people. The influence of Mann Ki Baat extends beyond just conversations—it has translated into real action on the ground. Discussions on water conservation led to the creation of over 75,000 water reservoirs across villages. PM Modi's mention of local handicrafts and traditional industries led to a surge in demand for indigenous products. Initiatives like "Vocal for Local" gained

significant traction, supporting small businesses and rural artisans. Individuals like Aditi Balbir (rural tourism entrepreneur) and Ram Shankar Verma (solar energy entrepreneur) were inspired by the program to contribute to sustainable development. Moreover, during the COVID-19 pandemic, the program played a crucial role in dispelling fears, encouraging vaccinations, and acknowledging frontline workers, providing emotional support to millions. In one of its most impactful episodes during the crisis, PM Modi interacted with healthcare workers and shared inspiring stories of community-led relief efforts, boosting morale across the country. Mann Ki Baat has redefined political communication in India. Unlike conventional speeches, it adopts a conversational and personal tone, making it feel more relatable to the

common man. While the program is non-political, it indirectly strengthens government initiatives by creating awareness and encouraging citizen participation. A study by the Indian Institute of Management, Rohtak, revealed that over 23 crore people listen to or watch Mann Ki Baat regularly, and over a billion people have tuned in at least once. The program has generated over 10 crore messages and suggestions from citizens, reflecting its immense popularity and engagement. Several key episodes stand out for their deep societal impact: First Episode (October 3, 2014): The inaugural episode focused on cleanliness and Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's birth anniversary year. It laid the foundation for the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan. Eighth Episode (May 31, 2015): PM Modi paid tribute to former President APJ Abdul Kalam

and encouraged students to learn from their exam results, whether successful or not. 33rd Episode (June 25, 2017): PM Modi praised the village of Mubarkpur in Andhra Pradesh for becoming open defecation-free during Ramadan. He highlighted the community's initiative to build toilets without government aid. 45th Episode (July 29, 2018): PM Modi mentioned the rescue of Thai football players trapped in a cave and encouraged participation in the 'Run for Unity' on Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel's birth anniversary. 100th Episode (April 30, 2023): In this milestone episode, PM Modi reflected on how Mann Ki Baat has connected him with millions of Indians and celebrated its role in sharing positive stories. 119th Episode (February 23, 2025): PM Modi addressed the rising issue of childhood obesity, highlighting its severe health risks and encouraging citizens to reduce oil consumption. He also celebrated ISRO's achievements and the upcoming Mahakumbh Mela.

Mann Ki Baat is more than just a radio broadcast—it is a reflection of India's progress, aspirations, and collective efforts toward a better future. By celebrating local heroes, promoting positive social change, and addressing key national issues, the program has successfully connected governance with grassroots aspirations. As it continues its journey, it remains a vital platform for nation-building, inspiration, and community-driven action. Its unique approach of involving citizens directly has made it an effective medium to bring about behavioural change, instill pride in India's cultural heritage, and encourage social responsibility. With over 23 crore regular listeners and more than 1 billion cumulative viewers, Mann Ki Baat continues to leave an indelible mark on India's socio-political landscape, proving that a simple yet powerful conversation can unite a nation in progress and transformation.

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Let this Ramadan be a month of joy for underprivileged families

DR FAZAL UL HAQ WANI

A fresh sense of devotion and thankfulness fills our hearts as we enter the auspicious month of Ramadan. It is a time for introspection, prayer, and most importantly, kindness. We learn endurance, patience, and compassion for people who face hunger and deprivation on a daily basis through fasting. While many of us in Kashmir sit around well-laid tables at Iftar, enjoying a variety of delicacies, there are countless families in our own villages and neighbourhoods who break their fasts with nothing more than a glass of water.

The contrast at Iftar tables
Kashmir's Ramadan evenings are beautiful. Families assemble around tables laden with a variety

of food as the MaghribA-zaan to prayer reverberates across the valley. Dates, fruits, firni, sharbat, and a variety of fried snacks like pakoras and samosas are all essentials of Kashmiri iftar plates. The aroma of kebabs, ristas and mutton yakhni fills the air, serving as a reminder of the wealth and warmth we are blessed to enjoy. However, this time of day does not provide the same level of comfort for many families who are poor. Plain water and, if they're lucky, a slice of bread make up their Iftar. While the rest of us enjoy lavish feasts, some families in our own communities suffer in silence from hunger.

The disparity is stark, yet it often goes unnoticed. The Reality of Poverty in Kashmir

Kashmir, despite its natural beauty and rich cultural heritage, has long been grappling with economic hardships. Many families, especially those who rely on daily wages, find it difficult to make ends meet. The harsh winters, coupled with political instability and unemployment, have left many people struggling for basic necessities. In rural areas and even in bustling towns, there are orphans, widows, and elderly people with no source of income. The month of Ramadan, which should be a time of spiritual renewal, becomes another battle for survival for them.

A Community-Based Approach to Giving

This Ramadan, let's do something about those in need rather than just wishing them well. Charity



starts at home, and starting at the village level is the most effective method to have an impact. Every neighbourhood, mohalla, and region should work together to determine which families require assistance. In addition to individual acts of piety, the spirit of Ramadan emphasizes group responsibility for the people in need.

What if every family in

a village give away a tiny amount of their money to support people in need? A needy family can benefit much from a small donation of a box of dates, a bag of aata (flour), some rice, cooking oil, and a pack of dry fruits. Since we buy these things in large quantities for ourselves, why don't we make sure our neighbours can also get them?

How We Can Organize This Initiative

Identify the Needy: To determine which families are in need, a small committee should be established in each village or mohalla. To preserve their dignity, this can be done in a discrete manner.

Gather Necessary Items: Food items that are necessary for Iftar and Suhoor can be donated in place of cash. Good choices include flour, rice, sugar, oil, dates, lentils, and milk powder.

Make Ramadan Boxes: Every family which is fortunate is welcome to donate a "Ramadan Box" filled with essential foods. A small donation can make a big difference.

Ensure Fair Distribution: In order to provide assistance to the most vulnerable, the gathered items should be dispersed

equitably. Community centres or nearby mosques can be used for this.

Promote Sadaqah and Zakat: Those who can afford it should proactively contribute to Zakat, making sure that the worthy receive their just portion.

A Call to Action for a Meaningful Ramadan

Ramadan is not just about personal devotion but also about kindness and social responsibility. The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) emphasized the importance of feeding the hungry, saying, "He is not a believer whose stomach is filled while his neighbour goes hungry." (Sunan al-Kubra)

It is feasible to establish a support network that helps the poor in a region like Kashmir, where community bonds are stronger.

Let's extend our kindness beyond our own tables this Ramadan. Let's extend it to the households where hardship and hunger exist. A poor family can experience enormous joy from a tiny act of kindness. The real joys of Ramadan are the excitement of a child when he receives a box of dates, the relief of a mother when she doesn't have to worry about flour for the month, or the appreciation of an elderly man when he gets to have an enjoyable Iftar.

Let us pledge to make this Ramadan not just a month of fasting, but a month of giving, caring, and sharing. May our tables be sources of joy not just for ourselves, but for the entire community!

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The Wisdom Behind Ramadan Fasting

PROF.M.ASLAM

The essence of fasting by saying that, ‘Its objective is to give man the power to keep in check his unruly desires and tendencies that make him prone to greed, revenge, anger, provocation, and fear; that make him commit various sins, acts of aggression, cruelty, and oppression. It seeks to free the human soul and lends it moral and spiritual strength to promote beauty, harmony, goodness, truth, kindness, peace, compassion and justice.’ Let us hope that we observe fasting the way it has been conceived.

The month of ‘Ramadan’ or fasting has again arrived. ‘Fasting or Roza’ as practiced by Muslims is an elaborate process spreading over a month every year. The basic objective of this month long annual process is to mould the behaviour and pattern of life of its practitioners in such a way that they turn out to be ideal human being. It implies that a person observing fast will not only observe abstinence from eating and drinking but will get into a sublime state of mind in order to develop positive feelings. It essentially means restraining oneself from listening, speaking, hearing or thinking bad about others. The expectation is that if one passes through this process of self-purification for a period of one month, its impact will last at least for remaining eleven months, when this process will be again repeated.

Tajuddin B. Shu’ aib in ‘Essentials of Ramadan, The Fasting Month,’ beautifully summarizes the essence of fasting as prescribed in Islam in the following words, ‘The institution of Fasting is a unique form of worship prescribed as part of an overall system of Islam. Its uniqueness mirrors the uniqueness of the human being, a creature of physical and spiritual parts whose excellence depends on the right proportion of these two parts. Too much of the physical material will ruin man, and too much of the spiritual will, too. Fasting orients the observer to the art of balancing the spiritual essentials with physical needs, a vivid proof that there is in all of us the will power, a pivotal element that controls our actions. This will be needed to help us curb the animalistic tendencies originating from the stomach, in full. It makes us forget about our beginning, it awakens the mind and kindles clear thinking and consciousness of Allah. Fasting is the sobering of a mind and reconstruction of our spiritual faculties.’

Fasting is an annual feature, which is expected to promote all conceivable attributes necessary for human excellence.

It is an annual training for the body and soul, a renewal of life, a tool to develop self-restraint and which also encourages the spirit of sharing and giving.

There are numerous benefits of fasting which among others include following:

The first and foremost benefit of fasting is to learn self-restraint. The Holy Quran says, ‘O ye who believe! Fasting is prescribed to you as it was prescribed to those before you, that ye may (learn) self-restraint. (Al-Baqarah 2:183). It originates from the fear of God (Allah), which guides the heart, the seat of emotion from spoilage and moral indecency.

It is a beautiful instrument to develop patience. In a hadith by Abu Hurairah (RA), the Prophet (SAW) said: “Fasting is not only to restrain from food and drink, fasting is to refrain from obscene (acts). If someone verbally abuses you or acts ignorantly towards you, say (to them) ‘I am fasting; I am fasting.’” (Ibn Khuzaimah). Fasting therefore helps in conditioning the heart, the soul, and the body on the virtues of patience, tenacity, and firmness in the face of adversity. As is rightly said, ‘Patience is the pinnacle of discipline, self-mastery and spiritual agility’.

Human life is an embodiment of acquired habits. It is very difficult to change these acquired habits. One of the greatest advantages of fasting is helping its observer to change his or her habits. I have seen many people quit smoking after they abstained from it for the whole month of fasting.

Fasting helps to develop moral and spiritual strength. Saleem Kayani in ‘Fasting in Islam’ sums up the essence of fasting by saying that, ‘Its objective is to give its Practitioner the power to keep in check his unruly desires and tendencies that make him prone to greed, revenge, anger, provocation, and fear; that make him/her commit various sins, acts of aggression, cruelty, and oppression. It seeks to free the human soul and lends it moral and spiritual strength to promote beauty, harmony, goodness, truth, kindness, peace, compassion and justice.’

Let us hope that we observe fasting the way it has been conceived and are bestowed with Allah’s (SWT) blessings so much needed in these turbulent times.

(The Author is former Vice Chancellor, IGNOU. He is a Member of the Collegium of Eminent Social Scientists constituted by the ICSSR; Fellow EDI of the World Bank; and Distinguished Fellow, AGRASRI, Tirupati, A.P. He can be reached at: profaslam10@gmail.com)

ADV KAUSAR HASSAN

Ramadan is often perceived as a test of physical endurance, a month where believers abstain from food and drink from dawn to dusk. However, if fasting were merely about enduring hunger, it would be no different from a diet or a routine fast practiced for health benefits. The true essence of Ramadan lies in self-restraint, not just in terms of food but in controlling our ‘nafs’ the inner self that drives our desires, impulses, and emotions. Fasting is not simply about depriving the body of nourishment; it is about disciplining the soul, refining our character, and drawing closer to Allah (SWT). Without self-restraint, fasting loses its spiritual essence, becoming an act of starvation rather than transformation.

The Quran explicitly states the purpose of fasting:

“O you who have believed, fasting has been prescribed for you as it was prescribed for those before you, that you may attain taqwa.” (Surah Al-Baqarah 2:183)

Taqwa, or God-consciousness, is not achieved by mere hunger but by disciplining one’s actions, thoughts, and desires. A person may abstain from food yet continue to indulge in gossip, dishonesty, arrogance, or wastefulness—negating the very purpose of the fast. The Prophet Muhammad (SAW) reinforced this by saying:

“Whoever does not give up false speech and evil actions, Allah is not in need of his leaving his food and drink.” (Sahih al-Bukhari, 1903)

This hadith serves as a power-



ful reminder that the true challenge of Ramadan is not about enduring hunger but about purifying one’s speech, behavior, and intentions. If a person refrains from food yet engages in arguments, spreads negativity, or wastes time in fruitless activities, their fast becomes an empty ritual rather than a means of self-improvement.

The Modern-Day Struggles: Social Media and the Digital Distraction

One of the greatest tests of self-restraint in today’s world is the overwhelming influence of social media. While fasting should teach discipline, contemporary digital culture promotes the exact opposite instant gratification, impulsive behavior, and endless distractions. The Instagram algorithm, for example, is designed to keep users engaged, pulling them into a cycle of scrolling, comparing, and seeking validation. Ramadan, instead of being a time of spiritual reflection, is often reduced to a month of iftar photos, extravagant

meals, and curated posts showcasing acts of worship.

Social media platforms, while offering opportunities for knowledge and connection, can also be sources of distraction and even sin. Engaging in unnecessary debates, spreading misinformation, or consuming content that weakens one’s faith contradicts the principles of Ramadan. A person may abstain from food yet spend hours mindlessly scrolling, consuming content that neither benefits their soul nor strengthens their relationship with Allah (SWT). The Prophet (peace be upon him) warned about wasting time on things that do not concern us, and Ramadan is the perfect opportunity to break free from the addiction to digital distractions and refocus on what truly matters.

The Paradox of Excess: Overindulgence in a Month of Moderation

Ramadan is meant to cultivate simplicity, gratitude, and empa-

thy for those less fortunate. Yet, in many cultures, it has ironically become a season of excess—extravagant iftars, lavish shopping sprees, and overindulgence in food the moment the fast is broken. Instead of reflecting on hunger and deprivation, many people engage in feasting, undoing the very self-discipline that fasting was meant to instill.

The Quran warns against wastefulness and excess:

“And do not waste [resources] extravagantly. Indeed, the wasteful are brothers of the devils.” (Surah Al-Isra 17:26-27)

If we spend our days in hunger only to overeat at night, or if we replace one indulgence with another, have we truly understood the purpose of Ramadan? The month is meant to teach self-restraint, yet the culture of consumption has transformed it into a festival of indulgence. The struggle, therefore, is not just in avoiding food but in resisting the temptation to turn Ramadan into an occasion for extravagance rather than introspection.

Mastering the Nafs: The Ultimate Success of Ramadan

The greatest challenge of Ramadan is not simply refraining from food but conquering the nafs; our inner desires and inclinations. The nafs drives our anger, impatience, greed, and attachment to worldly pleasures. While hunger may discipline the body, true fasting disciplines the soul. If we continue to indulge in negativity, grudges, and arrogance while fasting, we have not truly fasted—we have merely stayed hungry.

Allah reminds us of the true victory in self-discipline:

“But as for he who feared the position of his Lord and prevented the soul from [unlawful] inclination, then indeed, Paradise will be his refuge.” (Surah An-Nazi’at 79:40-41)

Ramadan is a spiritual training ground. It is a time to break bad habits, develop patience, and cultivate sincerity. If fasting does not lead us to become more mindful of our words, more forgiving in our relationships, and more conscious of our actions, then we have missed the true essence of this sacred month.

Ramadan is not merely a test of physical endurance but a journey of self-discipline, reflection, and renewal. Fasting without self-restraint is like a body without a soul—an act without meaning. If we continue indulging in distractions, harmful speech, and excess while abstaining only from food, we risk missing the deeper purpose of this sacred month.

Let this Ramadan be different. Let it be a time of true self-purification, where we control not only our hunger but also our desires, words, and habits. Let us replace idle scrolling with Quranic reflection, arguments with acts of kindness, and wastefulness with generosity. The real measure of Ramadan’s impact is not how hungry we felt, but how much we have grown.

As when the month passes, ask yourself: Have I merely stayed hungry, or have I truly transformed? The answer to this question defines whether our fasting was an obligation fulfilled or a soul awakened.

(Author is Advocate at Munsiff Court Sumbal and LL.M. scholar at Central University of Kashmir. Feedback: advkausarhassan@gmail.com)

The Betrayal of Trust: How Kashmir’s Healthcare System Fails Its People



NASIR HUSSAIN
MIRGUND PATTAN

In an ideal world, hospitals are sanctuaries of healing, and doctors are the guardians of life. But in Kashmir’s government hospitals, this ideal crumbles under the weight of negligence, corruption, and greed. From the lowest-ranked staff to the highest authorities,

the system is plagued with dishonesty, leaving the sick at the mercy of those who should be their saviors.

A System Built on Favoritism and Exploitation

The suffering of patients begins long before they even see a doctor. Endless waiting hours, delayed services, and chaotic hospital corridors are routine. But the real insult comes when a doctor’s friend or relative walks in and is immediately attended to, bypassing those who have waited for hours. This favoritism is not an exception; it is the rule.

When patients finally get their turn, how much time do they actually get with the doctor? Barely two minutes. There’s no genuine inquiry into the patient’s progress, no concern for side effects, no attempt to understand their struggles. It’s a mechanical transaction, not a consultation.

Government Hospitals: A Side Job for Doctors

One of the most infuriating realities of Kashmir’s healthcare system is that for many doctors, government hospitals are just a formality—a place where they clock in late, leave early, and put in the bare

minimum effort before rushing to their private clinics. Their real focus? Profiting off desperate patients in private practice.

Why do these doctors, earning between Rs 25,000 to Rs 1,00,000, refuse to arrive at hospitals on time? Why doesn’t the health department hold them accountable? A poor patient struggles to reach the hospital by 6 or 7 AM, yet a doctor cannot arrive by 8 AM? The system bends over backward to accommodate doctors, while patients are left to suffer.

The Deaf Ears of the

Health Department

Complaints against doctors rarely lead to consequences. Does the Chief Medical Officer (CMO) ever take action against them? Doubtful. The system protects its own, turning a blind eye to incompetence and corruption.

This is not just about late arrivals or early exits—it’s about a complete collapse of ethics. Patients don’t just struggle with illnesses; they struggle against the very people meant to heal them.

The Future: A Hub of Sickness, Not Healing

Let’s not deceive ourselves—if this continues,

Kashmir is heading toward a health crisis where people won’t die from disease, but from medical negligence. Hospitals will no longer be places of healing but breeding grounds for despair.

This article may not change the system. The timings won’t be revised, doctors won’t suddenly develop a conscience, and corruption won’t vanish overnight. But the truth must be spoken.

A day will come when Kashmiris will no longer fall victim to their illnesses—but to the unchecked power of those who were supposed to save them.

Departmental Exams Are Crucial For Improving Quality Education

MUNTASHIR KIFAYAT HUSSAIN

For the effective implementation of education policies, including NEP 2020, there is a strong need to introduce departmental examinations for the promotion of school teachers in Jammu and Kashmir.

The model of the departmental examination in the education sector will create healthy competition among educators, making them 24/7 teachers. This will encourage skill improvement, quality education, and concept updates, thereby initiating healthy competition among educators.

The HOI of a middle school is a master cadre, while that of a high school is a headmaster. In simple terms, a teacher, after completing about 16 years of service, is promoted to master grade by the department, and after about 26 years, to headmaster. This type of

departmental promotion has harmed the education sector in J&K more than any other factor. The real issue is that when a Rehbar-e-Taleem (RET) teacher is confirmed or a general line teacher is appointed, they already know that after about 16 years, they will become an HOI at the middle school level, and after about 26 years, a headmaster at the high school level. It does not matter how much they excel as a leader or not. The pedagogy of teaching, inclusive education, holistic development, and leadership qualities remain unassessed.

If this issue is not addressed in time, it will create havoc in the coming years. An effective HOI is vital in driving holistic development, reforming education, and realizing the vision of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020. The success of any education policy implementation lies significantly in the proactive and innovative



role of the Head of the Institute (Master at the middle school level and Headmaster at the high school level). When promoted on the basis of merit through departmental examinations, the HOI will be a researcher with a clear vision and strategy, promoting a safe and inclusive school climate and revitalizing the system. Such a promotion process will earn a different level of respect in the eyes and hearts of educators and the public.

NEP 2020 advocates for a

robust system of continuous professional development, performance assessment, and teacher training programs to enhance education standards. It emphasizes the continuous assessment of teachers to ensure they are equipped with complete pedagogical skills. This objective will be largely supported by the introduction of departmental examinations for promotions.

Advanced education systems worldwide follow a merit-based promotion system

through departmental examinations, ensuring that only competent and skilled educators advance in their careers.

The system of departmental examinations for promotions fosters a culture of continuous learning and motivation. This will benefit students, as they will be taught by updated and skilled educators. The system will encourage innovation, self-improvement, and skill development, keeping educators motivated to progress in their careers.

A friend of mine, after completing about 25 years as a teacher and master, was promoted to the next level as a lecturer in physics. By the time he was promoted, he had forgotten even the basics of physics, as he had spent all those years teaching mathematics at the middle and high school levels. He even considered forfeiting the promotion. The introduction of departmental examinations for promotions

to different cadres will help educators remain proficient in their degree subjects.

Departmental promotions without examinations in the education sector discourage innovation and self-improvement, leading to stagnation in teaching methodologies in J&K. The implementation of examinations for promotions has already been adopted by many states in India and countries like Finland, Singapore, and Japan long ago. If implemented in J&K, this reform will revolutionize the education sector, benefiting both educators and students.

The government is spending crores to uplift the education sector. It is time for the J&K Teachers Forum to come forward and discuss the implementation of departmental examinations for promotions with the concerned officials. This must be done with transparency and integrity, moving away from policies based on

majority appeasement and focusing on the interests of students and competitive educators. Such a move will support accountability and enhance public trust in the education system.

In most government departments, employees aiming for promotions to the next level must first pass a departmental examination.

In recent years, the education department has issued several circulars exploring the possibility of implementing promotional exams for teachers, masters, lecturers, headmasters, Zonal Education Officers (ZEOs), and principals. This proposal has received significant support from both educators and the public.

It is high time to implement departmental examinations for promotions in the education sector to align with NEP 2020.

The writer is a teacher at Secondary School Narabal

DDC Kulgam takes holistic review of RDD&PR sector Instructs officers to accelerate pace of works, ensure timely completion

■ **Farooq Rather**

KULGAM, MARCH 06: District Development Commissioner (DDC) Kulgam, Athar Aamir Khan, Thursday chaired a meeting of Rural Development Department and Panchayati Raj (RDD&PR) at Mini-Secretariat here to review the functioning, progress and implementation status of various schemes in the district.

During the meeting, the DDC took a detailed review of progress achieved under various programs and initiatives in the RDD sector.

It was informed that under MGNREGA, 7263 works were taken, out of which 6257 works

were completed till date.

Additionally, 2377724 person-days (PDS) were generated till date.

Reviewing the progress under PMAY (Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana) units, the chair was informed that against 5868 sanctioned units, 5291 units have been completed by the end of February.

The DDC directed Officers to ensure the completion of all PMAY units promptly. He emphasized the need to accelerate the pace of work to meet annual targets and ensure timely payment of wages.

Reviewing the progress under the district capex budget it was informed that against the allotted works of 1589,



1329 works have been taken up while 1118 works have been completed till date.

He also reviewed the progress in solid waste management, door-to-door waste collection in panchayats and construction and completion status of community soakage pits, and community compost pits.

The chair was informed that under SBM against a target of 52 works, 39 have been taken up and 28 have been completed, while in community soakage pits component under MGNREGA, 17 works have been taken up and 7 have been completed.

The DDC stressed Tehsildars and BDOs to identify suitable

land for composite pits and Gram Panchayat Ghars to be constructed.

He also underscored the importance of maximum onsite work inspections to ensure quality of works.

He directed Officers to scale up the execution of all works and ensure time-bound completion without compromising quality.

The meeting was attended by ADDC Altaf Ahmad, ACD, ACP, Ex. Engineer REW, all BDOs, AEEs, AEs, VLWs and GRSS. He directed Officers to scale up the execution of all works and ensure time-bound completion without compromising quality.

SDM reviews progress of developmental works, essential supplies in Sub Division Paddar

■ **HT News Network**

PADDAR, MARCH 06: Sub-Divisional Magistrate Padder, Dr. Amit Kumar conducted a series of meetings with concerned departments and public representatives today to assess the progress of developmental work and ensure the availability of essential supplies in the aftermath of the recent snowfall.

During the meetings, it was

informed that the Patherdaki point is now safe for traffic movement from Padder to Kishtwar. The concerned departments were instructed to remain alert and promptly carry out restoration work, including ensuring water and power supply and restoring road connectivity immediately and report on daily basis.

Additionally, all ongoing schemes for the current financial year must be completed as per schedule. The SDM emphasized the importance of

prioritizing the needs of the residents and ensuring their well-being in the wake of the recent snowfall.

Public was urged to cooperate with the authorities and report any issues or concerns promptly. Additionally, all ongoing schemes for the current financial year must be completed as per schedule. The SDM emphasized the importance of prioritizing the needs of the residents and ensuring their well-being in the wake of the recent snowfall.

03 Medical shops closed down for violations at Shopian

■ **HT News Network**

SHOPIAN, MARCH 06: 03 Medical shops were today closed down for improper maintenance of sale records and improper storage of medicine in Shopian.

The action against the guilty was taken during intensive inspection of medical shops in Pinjoora, Pahlipora Trenz, Molu Dangerpora and Turkawangam villages of Shopian in order to ensure compliance to the norms under vogue.

The main focus of the drive was to check the compliance to directions with respect to the computerized billing system and maintenance of records of scheduled formulations. Further, chemists were given directions for raising digital invoices and maintaining records of scheduled formulations properly and ensuring compliance for computerized billing system installation.

J&K, Ladakh High Court holds Full Court reference to condole demise of Advocates

■ **HT News Network**

JAMMU, MARCH 6: A Full Court reference was held today in the Courtroom of Chief Justice at Jammu Wing of the High Court to condole the demise of Subash Dutt, S. Karanbir Singh, Hafeez Ur Rehman, Sonam Dorje, Chand Mohan Gupta, S. Jaspinder Singh, Bachan Lal Galgotra, Ashok Parihar, Devki Nandan and R.K. Bhatia, Advocates of the High Court, who have passed away here during the past few years. On the occasion, the Senior Additional Advocate General and the President, J&K High Court Bar Association, Jammu in their condolence addresses remembered the contributions of late Advocates.

The Senior Additional Advocate General, on behalf of Government Advocates, offered condolences on the demise of these Advocates and prayed for their eternal peace and strength to the bereaved families.

Public Notice

My daughter's name has been wrongly written as AYIQ JAAN D/O MOHAMMAD AYOUB KHAN in her Adhaar card while her correct name is AYAT JAAN D/O MOHAMMAD AYOUB KHAN which needs to be corrected if anybody having any objection in this regard he/she may file his/her objection in the office of BDO WAGOORA / Tehsil office WAGOORA within seven days from the publication of this notice after that no objection will be entertained

NAME.....MOHAMMAD AYOUB KHAN
F./O AYAT JAAN
R/O MANAGAM

Public Notice

I have changed my name from (old name). Bisma Basharat Rather to (New name) Bisma Basharat. In future I will be known as (new name) Bisma Basharat. If any body is having any objection he/she may contact Passport Office, Srinagar with in 7 days. After 7 days no objection will be accepted.

اطلاع عام

ہر خاص و عام کو اطلاع دی جاتی ہے کہ میرے بٹک اکوانٹ زیر نمبر 0122040100011544 میں میرا نام محمد خان اندراج ہوا ہے جب کہ میرا اصلی نام مطابق ادھار کاڈ غلام محمد خان ہے اب اس کی دستگی کرانی مطلوب ہے کسی کو کوئی عذر ہو تو وہ سات یوم کے اندر اندر جے کے بٹک پھلگام کے دفتر میں پیش کرے بعد از معا کوئی عذر قبول نہیں ہوگا
المستہر غلام محمد خان ولد روستن دین
ساکن اورہ پھلگام

اطلاع عام

ہر خاص و عام کو اطلاع دی جاتی ہے کہ مجھے ہوم سٹے بنام Alpine Glow home stay کی رجسٹریشن محکمہ ٹورازم پھلگام میں کرانی مطلوب ہے کسی کو کوئی عذر ہو تو وہ سات یوم کے اندر اندر اسسٹنڈ ڈیرکٹر ٹورازم پھلگام کے دفتر میں پیش کرے بعد از معا کوئی عذر قبول نہیں ہوگا
المستہر غلام محمد خان ولد روستن دین
ساکن اورہ پھلگام

اطلاع عام

ہر خاص و عام کو اطلاع دی جاتی ہے کہ مجھے ہوم سٹے بنام Alpine Glow home stay at Batakote Pahalgam کی رجسٹریشن محکمہ ٹورازم پھلگام میں کرانی مطلوب ہے کسی کو کوئی عذر ہو تو وہ سات یوم کے اندر اندر اسسٹنڈ ڈیرکٹر ٹورازم پھلگام کے دفتر میں پیش کرے بعد از معا کوئی عذر قبول نہیں ہوگا
المستہر غلام نسار احمد ملک ولد عبدل حمید ملک
ساکنہ بٹہ کوٹ پھلگام پھلگام
نمبر 8491052378

PUBLIC NOTICE

My daughter's name is wrongly written as Ibrat YAQOOB in Adhaar Card date of birth certificate while her correct name is NOORAIN YAQOOB as per Date of birth Certificate .Which needs to be corrected if anybody having any objection in this regard he / she may contact with Concerned Authority within seven days from the publication of this notice after that no objection will be entertained.

Name.....MOHD YAQOOB BHAT
F/O NOORAIN YAQOOB
R/o SHALTENG SRINAGER

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 attest 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 Home Stay), 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 bed rooms 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/ Domestic 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 nearby 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.

Subject: Grant of registration of the proposed travel unit under the name and style " Rut Safar Tour & Travel." Situated at Batamaloo Srinagar.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Where I Mohammad Ayub Paray S/o: Gh Rasool Paray R/o: Warapahu Alestang Ganderbal. Intends to apply in the Department of Tourism for registration of my proposed travel unit under Name and style "Rut Safar" Tour & Travel. " Situated at Batamaloo Srinagar under Tourist trade Act 1978/82/2011-12.

Whereas I will, submit State Subject/ Domestic 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 nearby 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.

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 hassubmitted case file pertaining to Birth of AASIF HAMEED BHAT S/O ABDUL HAMEED BHAT R/O ATHOORA RESHIPORA Tehsil KREERI Distt. Baramulla having verified the date of Birth as 09/09/2020 and event has been shown to be occurred at SDH KREERI for issuance of delay order. In this connection, if anyone have any objection to the issuance of delay order of death certificate shall present his/her claim this office within 07 days, after that no objection shall be entertaine
Executive Magistrate
1st Class KREERI

Subject: Grant of registration of the paying Guest house/ Home stay under the name and style " Al-Fanoos Paying Guest House/Home Stay" Situated at Bangarden Nar Sing Garh Srinagar.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Whereas, I Tafazal Hussain Khan S/o: Gulam Hassan Khan R/o: Bal Garden Nar Sing Garh 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 "Al-Fanoos Paying Guest House/Home Stay" Situated at near Bal Garden Nar Sing Srinagar. under Tourist trade Act 1978/82/2011-12. Whereas I will submit Landownership Certificate from Concerned Tehsildar with attest 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 Home Stay), 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 bed rooms 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.

PUBLIC NOTICE

My name & DOB has been wrongly written as MIR 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

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:- phgwd@yahoo.com, Tel./Fax No:- 0194-2411285

Extension Notice 4th

- Subject: 1. Construction of Gravel Packed Production Tube Well at Migrant Colony Ichgam Budgam shifted to (Kakanmaran).
2. Construction of Gravel Packed Production Tube Well at Kangalhal Magreypora Well No.1 District Anantnag.

Due to "Poor/No Response" for the work advertised vide e-NIT No.52/JS-PHE/GWDS/Mech. of 2024-25 issued vide this office endorsement No: -JS-PHE/GWDS/24-25/Corrs./ 10304-318, Dated: 08-01-2025. Bearing Tender ID No. 2025_PHE_269923_3 & 4. Which was scheduled to be downloaded till 05-03-2025 Up-to 11:00 PM are extended as per the details given below: -

S. No.	Item	Fresh Date
1.	Period of submission of bids	17-03-2025 Up-to 11:00 AM
2.	Date of opening of tenders	18-03-2025 11:00 AM

NOTE:

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

DIPK-12705/24
Dated: 06-03-2025

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

CUKashmir's ICC holds 'Awareness Walk' to promote women's rights

■ HT News Network

Ganderbal, Mar6: In the lead-up to International Women's Day, the Internal Complaints Committee (ICC) of the Central University of Kashmir (CUKashmir) organized an 'Awareness Walk' at the Science Campus, Nunar, here on Thursday.

Addressing the gathering, Vice Chancellor Prof. A. Ravinder Nath emphasized that the initiative serves as a powerful platform to advocate for women's safety, dignity, and rights. "The ICC plays a pivotal role in ensuring a safe and inclusive environment by addressing workplace harassment and gender-based inequalities. This

walk seeks to spread awareness, educate individuals about their rights, and highlight the collective responsibility of creating an equitable society," he remarked.

Prof. Nath further stated that women's active participation is crucial for India's vision of becoming a developed nation by 2047. "A truly Viksit Bharat—prosperous, equitable, and progressive—can only be realized when women are empowered as equal partners in progress. As architects of change, they shape a just and harmonious world, proving that no civilization can thrive without their contributions."

ICC Chairperson and Dean of International Affairs, Prof. Sand-



hya Tiwari, emphasized that the initiative aims to raise awareness about how women instill morals, traditions, and education within families, institutions and societies. She

stressed the need to respect women's rights, promote gender sensitivity, and inspire action against discrimination. She said, the messages displayed on the placards conveyed

through this walk encourage individuals to take a proactive stance against gender-based violence and inequality," she stated. She further highlighted the indispensable role of wom-

en in economic growth, from entrepreneurship to corporate leadership, fostering innovation and development.

Dean of the School of Life Sciences, Prof. Abid Hamid Dar, spoke on the influence of women in shaping future generations. "Women play a lead role in STEM and every other walk of life. As teachers, doctors, and social workers, they contribute significantly to the intellectual and emotional well-being of society. Their leadership in governance, politics, and business ensures balanced decision-making and inclusive progress," he added. Dean of the School of Physical and Chemical Sciences, Prof. Muhammad Yousuf, reiterated the significance of gen-

der equality, stating that societies flourish when women are empowered, educated, and provided with equal opportunities. "Women have always been the foundation and architects of society, shaping its values, culture, and progress. As nurturers, educators, and leaders, they play a crucial role in strengthening communities and driving social change," he said.

Holding banners, placards, and posters advocating gender equality and women's rights, the participants later took out a march around the area, engaging with local women and fostering dialogue on the importance of an inclusive and just society.

DC conducts on-site inspection of under-construction SE R&B & BDO office in Block Budgam

■ HT News Network

BUDGAM, MARCH 06: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Budgam, Akshay Labroo, today visited the construction sites of the Block Development Office/ BDC office at Block Headquarters Budgam and the Superintending Engineer (SE) R&B office building in Budgam to assess the progress of the ongoing work.

The DC conducted an extensive inspection of the construction sites.

While reviewing the progress of the BDC office complex, the DC directed officials and engineers to uphold high standards of quality and workmanship. He emphasised the importance of timely completion and directed the concerned departments to ensure the project is completed within the stipulated time-



frame. Stressing strict adherence to construction guidelines and the optimal use of resources, he called for the efficient execution of the project.

Later, the DC visited the construction site of the SE R&B office building, where he directed the officials and executing agency to adhere strictly to the set deadlines. He reiterated the administration's commitment to completing all the infrastructural projects in Bud-

gam on time with quality work. On the occasion, the DC stated that both the projects are important for enhancing administrative efficiency and delivering better services to the local population of Budgam.

The DC further said, that both office complexes are in the final stages of construction and directed the officials to ensure the pending work is completed at the earliest so that these facilities can be dedicated

to the public soon. During the site inspection, the DC was accompanied by Chief Planning Officer (CPO) Budgam, Assistant Commissioner Development (ACD) Budgam, Assistant Commissioner Panchayat (ACP) Budgam, Executive Engineer REW Budgam, BDO Budgam, senior officers of R&B Budgam, and other senior officials. The DC conducted an extensive inspection of the construction sites.

While reviewing the progress of the BDC office complex, the DC directed officials and engineers to uphold high standards of quality and workmanship. He emphasised the importance of timely completion and directed the concerned departments to ensure the project is completed within the stipulated time-frame.

DC Ganderbal reviews implementation of HADP Also takes stock of progress of Credit Linked Schemes of Agriculture, allied sectors

■ HT News Network

GANDERBAL, MARCH 06: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Ganderbal, Jatin Kishore today convened a meeting of Officers from Agriculture and allied sectors, here to review the progress of registration of farmers on various portals and progress under Holistic Agriculture Development Program (HADP).

At the outset, the DC sought details about the registration of eligible farmers on Daksh Kisan Portal, KKG and Kisan Sathi portal.

Each department presented a comprehensive overview of their achievements and progress under Credit Linked Schemes and registration of farmers under HADP.

The DC directed departmental officers to augment registration of farmers and set the target of registrations on the Daksh Kisan Portal and Kisan Sathi Portal.

He also assessed the implementa-



tion of the Holistic Agriculture Development Programme (HADP) in the district. Kishore urged all officers to intensify efforts to reach out to farmers, ensuring maximum participation in HADP initiatives and utilizing available resources to their full potential.

Furthermore, streamlining Credit Linkage schemes implementation was also emphasized so that a com-

mitment to optimizing its advantages for sustainable agricultural growth is achieved.

The meeting was attended by Chief Planning Officer, Chief Agriculture Officer, Chief Horticulture Officer, Chief Animal Husbandry Officer, District Sheep Husbandry Officer, District Officer Sericulture, AD Fisheries, and other concerned officials.

150 kgs Suspected dates seized, 06 petty FBOs recommended for compounding at Anantnag

■ HT News Network

ANANTNAG, MARCH 06: Food Safety department Anantnag today seized 150 Kgs of suspected dates and procured various samples of dates for detailed analysis from NABL Accredited Laboratory.

The dates were seized during a joint market inspection conducted in different markets of the district by a team comprising officials from Food Safety Department, Anantnag, FCS&CA, and Legal Metrology Department Anantnag in view of the holy month of Ramadan.

During the inspection, 06 petty FBOs found violating different provisions of Food Safety & Standards Act, 2006 were recommended for compounding under Section 69 of Food Safety & Standards Act, 2006.

The comprehensive inspections targeted establishments dealing with sale/trade of dates, fresh fruit and vegetables and other edible stores with a focus on checking availability of safe and wholesome food to general public as per the mandate of Food Safety & Standards Act, 2006/ Regulations thereunder and enforcing price and weight controls for the benefit of consumers.

Meanwhile, the inspection team cautioned the general public regarding the purchase of food items which are not properly labelled as per law.

Furthermore, authorities assured that regular inspections will continue in the district to ensure availability of quality food items, curb malpractices, ensure fair pricing and protect consumer interests.

DC Bandipora conducts surprise visit to District Hospital

■ HT News Network

BANDIPORA, MARCH 06: In order to assess the functioning of the hospital and review the availability of essential medical services and facilities, the Deputy Commissioner (DC) Bandipora, Manzoor Ahmad Qadri, on Thursday conducted a surprise visit to the District Hospital Bandipora. During the visit, Medical Superintendent, DH Bandipora briefed the Deputy Commissioner regarding the operations and functioning of various sections within the hospital.

Qadri took round of various sections of the hospital to evaluate the condition of medical machinery and inspect the presence of doctors and paramedics.

He stressed the importance of maintaining high standards of healthcare and proper monitoring of hospital operations. The DC emphasized the critical role of timely medical assistance, especially during emergencies and urged the hospital administration to address any gaps in service delivery promptly to ensure better healthcare services for the public.

JKSPYM SLCA J&K organizes one-day Training Program for Master Volunteers in Kathua

■ HT News Network

KATHUA, MARCH 06: In line with the Government of India's commitment to create a drug-free society, JKSPYM SLCA J&K today organized a one-day training program for master volunteers of District Kathua as part of the Nasha Mukta Bharat Abhiyaan (NMBA).

The event was attended by Additional District Commissioner Kathua, Ranjit Singh, District Social Welfare Officer, Varun Choudhary and other officials of the Social Welfare Department.

Addressing the gathering, ADC expressed concern over the rising trend of substance abuse among youth in Jammu and Kashmir, urging the master volunteers to fully benefit from the training and apply the knowledge gained to fight



drug addiction in the district. The program commenced with a welcome note, followed by an introduction to JKSPYM and SLCA J&K by Program Director, JKSPYM Pallavi Singh.

As many as 64 master volunteers participated in the training, which included four sessions on various aspects of drug de-addiction, such as "Information on Drugs, Drug Use, and its Consequences," "District Level Nasha Mukta Bharat Abhiyaan," "Interven-

tion Spectrum in Drug Treatment and Prevention," and "Roles and Responsibilities of Master Volunteers and Nasha Mukta Bharat Leaders."

Resource persons from SLCA delivered comprehensive presentations, highlighting the growing prevalence of drug use in India.

The training program enhanced participants' understanding of substance abuse while equipping them with the necessary skills to become advocates for drug prevention.

Mission Yuva: Orientation program for SBDU, BHDs, Yuva Doots held at Ganderbal

■ HT News Network

GLANDERED, MARCH 06: A one-day orientation program under Mission YUVA was today organized for members of the Small Business Development Unit (SBDU), Business Help Desk (BHD) and Yuva Doots at the Conference Hall of Mini Secretariat, Ganderbal.

The program was presided over by Deputy Commissioner (DC) Ganderbal, Jatin Kishore, along with Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC) Gulzar Ahmad.

The session aimed to equip participants with a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities in implementing the institutional business support mechanism under Mission Yuva, fostering self-employment and entrepreneurship in the district.

At the outset, Assistant Director, Employment, delivered a comprehensive presentation, outlining the specific duties of each committee member. The orientation covered key aspects of financial, legal, and market advisory support to budding entrepreneurs, ensuring an efficient and well-coordinated execution of the Mission Yuva initiative.

Speaking on the occasion, the DC emphasized the need for a strong support system for potential entrepreneurs, ensuring they receive comprehensive guidance in their journey towards self-employment. He stressed the importance of teamwork, clarity of responsibilities, and seamless coordination among all stakeholders for the successful implementation of the project.

DM Jammu chairs NCORD meeting to intensify anti-drugs measures Stresses awareness drives to educate youth against ill effects of drugs

■ HT News Network

JAMMU, MARCH 06: "Society and the district administration need to make coordinated efforts to curb the drug menace. Vigilance by all stakeholders and members of society is vital in this mission against drugs and for a healthy future", remarked District Magistrate Sachin Kumar Vaishya, while chairing a meeting of the Narco Coordination Centre (NCORD).

The meeting was attended by Senior Superintendent of Police Joginder Singh, Additional District Magistrate Anusya Jamwal, Sub-Divisional Magistrates, Tehsildars and other district officers. SP Headquarters Irshad Hussain Rather and SDPOs also attended the meeting.

Emphasising the need for preventive measures, the District Magistrate underscored the importance of raising aware-



ness among school and college students about the dangers of drug abuse. He reviewed the outcome programmes conducted so far and stressed that their impact should be visible and substantial. He called for active participation from SDMs, SDPOs, Tehsildars and SHOs in

educating the youth.

The District Magistrate highlighted the necessity of inter-departmental collaboration, stating that coordinated efforts involving the departments for Drug Control, Police and Education besides others are crucial for achieving tangible results.

He also directed Assistant Drug Controllers and other concerned officers to conduct regular surprise inspections of chemist shops. SDMs were instructed to oversee these inspections to ensure strict compliance.

To enhance surveillance and prevent misuse of pharmaceutical drugs, the meeting reiterated the enforcement of a recent order mandating the installation of CCTV cameras at key establishments across Jammu.

The meeting also focused on identifying and neutralising drug hotspots and dismantling the supply chain. The role of drug de-addiction centres and their adherence to established regulations was reviewed. Additionally, the strict implementation of the Cigarettes and other Tobacco Products Act (COTPA) in the district was highlighted as a priority.

DC reviews progress of National Rural Livelihood Mission in Poonch

■ HT News Network

POONCH, MARCH 06: Deputy Commissioner Poonch Vikas Kundal reviewed the progress of the National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM) in the district, focusing on strategies to enhance rural income generation through Self-Help Groups (SHGs).

During the meeting, the Deputy Commissioner reviews blockwise physical and financial progress and in-depth discussions revolved around shaping the future action plan for Self-Help Groups (SHGs) formation, strengthening SHG-Bank linkages, promoting financial inclusion, Capacity Building Trainings and advancing various livelihood initiatives.

The meeting commenced with insightful updates from the National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM) representatives. It was informed that the total number of SHGs is 4377 with 31110 active members engaged with these SHGs in the district, total number of Village Organizations is 337,



Total numbers of cluster-level federations is 29 showcased the extensive reach of community engagement in Poonch. The meeting emphasised creating a robust roadmap for income generation in rural areas, particularly highlighting the importance of empowering women through Self-Help Groups and micro-credit schemes. The Lakhpati Didi initiative, identification of potential Lakhpati Didi was discussed thoroughly.

Deputy Commissioner underscored the importance of collaborative efforts among SHGs to diversify livelihood activities and improve income levels. He issued a clear directive to officers, emphasizing their role in assisting SHGs to channel their collective endeavors toward establishing thriving and successful businesses. He also directed the concerned to achieve all allotted targets before ending this month. The meeting was attended by Assistant Commissioner Development, Assistant Commissioner Panchayat, District Programme Manager NRLM, All Block Programme Managers and other concerned officers. Deputy Commissioner underscored the importance of collaborative efforts among SHGs to diversify livelihood activities and improve income levels. He issued a clear directive to officers, emphasizing their role in assisting SHGs to channel their collective endeavors toward establishing thriving and successful businesses.

DC Kishtwar reviews progress on PMGSY projects

■ HT News Network

KISHTWAR, MARCH 06: Deputy Commissioner, Rajesh Kumar Shavan today reviewed and assessed the progress on Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY) works in Kishtwar and Marwah, ensuring timely execution and quality of road projects.

During the meeting, the DC took stock of ongoing PMGSY road construction works, including Shahu-Sazar Road, Kandani-Ohli Road and Ikhal Block Boundary to Lopara Road. The concerned officers apprised him of the latest progress and challenges faced in the execution of these projects.

A special discussion was held on the Shivas to Ongaie Road, particularly regarding its take-up point from the GREF Road. The Officer Commanding (OC) GREF was advised to ensure proper demarcation and pegging at the take-up point, facilitating the



encumbrance-free completion of the road project. The Executive Engineer PMGSY and contractors were directed to remove debris from take off point of GREF Road within 7 days. Executive Engineers were instructed to submit a comprehensive list of ongoing PMGSY roads, along with details of contractors and payment records for round maintenance.

The DC emphasized the importance of identifying and enlisting unconnected habitations for inclusion under

PMGSY Phase 4, ensuring better road connectivity for remote areas.

Additionally, the meeting deliberated on road safety measures and maintenance of PMGSY roads, particularly under the Disaster Management Preparedness Plan following the recent snowfall.

The meeting was attended by Chief Planning Officer (CPO) Kishtwar, Shahnawaz Bali, Executive Engineers PMGSY and other concerned engineers.

Commissioner JMC felicitates Shakti Udghosh Foundation on eve of Women's day

■ HT News Network

JAMMU, MARCH 06: Shakti Udghosh Foundation (NGO) was today felicitated by Commissioner Jammu Municipal Corporation Dr. Devansh Yadav for completing five days bike rally from Kathua to Poonch in which bikers from more than 6 states participated for a social cause of immediate concern of all the strata of the society viz Nasha Mukh Seemaiya.

It is emerging as one of the challenge for the Nation and all stakeholders to work in coordination to get rid of this menace from the society. He appreciated the bikers who have come from various states from Tamil Nadu to Jammu & Kashmir to join hands for one social



cause. The women bikers reached Jammu after completing their 5 days motorbike expedition covering Kathua, Samba, Jammu, Rajouri and Poonch Districts with the motive NASHA MUKH SEEMAYEIN. They also interacted with students of schools, colleges and masses of the border areas.

A video showcasing their 800 km journey was played during the programme. The experience gained by the participants in the rally was also shared in the event. Besides Nasha Mukh Seemaiyan programme, the bikers generated

awareness about Swachh Bharat Mission and various initiatives taken therein in Jammu & Kashmir. The citizen feedback regarding Swachhata was also taken by the women bikers. The Commissioner ensured them for all necessary assistance in future in carrying out such programmes for the benefits of the society.

The team was felicitated with trophies and appreciation certificates by the Commissioner, JMC, Joint Commissioner (H&S), and Health Officer. The staff of JMC also attended the event.

JKAACL organizes Musical Program 'Lal Wakh' to celebrate Lal Ded's Legacy

■ HT News Network

JAMMU, MARCH 06: The Jammu and Kashmir Academy of Art, Culture and Languages (JKAACL) today organized a mesmerizing musical program titled Lal Wakh at K.L. Saigal Hall, Jammu. The event was dedicated to the revered Kashmiri mystic poetess Lal Ded, also known as Lalleshwari, whose spiritual poetry continues to inspire generations. Relief and Rehabilitation Commissioner Dr. Arvind Karwani graced the occasion as the Chief Guest, while Secretary, JKAACL, Harvinder Kour was the Guest of Honour.

In his address, Dr. Arvind Karwani highlighted the profound influence of Lal Ded's poetry in shaping Kashmiri culture and spirituality. He emphasized the importance of preserving and pro-



moting her rich literary heritage through such cultural events. He also appreciated the efforts of the artists and musicians who contributed to making the evening a soulful tribute to the great saint-poetess. Additional Secretary JKAACL Sanjeev Rana in his welcome address, said that the program aimed to revive and celebrate the timeless Vakh's (verses) of Lal Ded, which carry deep spiritual and philosophical significance. He acknowledged that the event was conceived and designed under the

guidance of Secretary, JKAACL.

The program commenced with the melodious recitation of Lal Wakh by the renowned vocalist Dr. Deepali Watal, who captivated the audience with her soulful rendition. She was followed by another celebrated singer from Jammu and Kashmir, Naina Sapru, whose mesmerizing voice evoked the essence of Lal Ded's mysticism. Two young budding artists, Shivani and Sharat, also enthralled the audience with their sweet and melodious voices. The singers were

ably accompanied by talented musicians, including Rahul Sharma on Santoor, Amit Anand on Tabla, Amit Sharma on Rabab, Chandan on Synthesizer and Dr. Ramesh Nirash on Harmonium. Their musical expertise added depth and emotion to the recitals, making the event an unforgettable experience for all attendees. The event was skillfully conducted by the esteemed writer Vijay Wali, who provided insightful narration and kept the audience engaged throughout the program.

Lal Ded, also known as Lalleshwari, was a 14th-century Kashmiri mystic and poetess whose verses embody themes of self-realization, devotion, and universal truth. Her poetry, known as Lal Vakh's, transcends religious and social barriers, making her a revered figure among Hindus and Muslims alike.

HDFC Bank, Indian Army & CSC Academy expand Project NAMAN to 26 new locations to support Army Veterans and their families

■ HT News Network

Srinagar, Mar 6, KNT: HDFC Bank, India Army and CSC e-Governance have renewed the MoU to expand Project NAMAN – A Tribute to Veterans to 26 Directorate of Indian Army Veterans (DIAV) locations. Project NAMAN is designed to provide support and services to Army Veterans, their families and next of kins.

These CSC Centres, which will be operated by Army Veterans or their families or next of kins are dedicated to offer pension related services, Government to Citizen (G2C) services and Business to Consumer (B2C) services at their doorsteps within defence establishments itself. A tripartite Memo-



randum of Understanding (MoU) was renewed between HDFC Bank Limited (under Parivartan programme), Indian Army's Directorate of Indian Army Veterans (DIAV) and CSC Academy. The MoU was signed by Mr. Satyen Modi, Executive Vice President and Business Head, Alternate Banking Channels

& Partnerships - HDFC Bank, Mr. Pravin Chandekar, CEO - CSC Academy and Brigadier, Directorate of Indian Army Veterans in the presence of Ms. Smita Bhagat, Group Head - HDFC Bank, Mr. Sanjay Rakesh, Chairman - CSC Academy, Lieutenant General, DG (DC&W) - Indian Army and esteemed dig-

nitaries from the Indian Army, HDFC Bank and other senior officials. In the second phase, the project will be expanded to 26 DIAV locations across Rajasthan, West Bengal, Himachal Pradesh, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Punjab, Jammu & Kashmir, Meghalaya, Bihar, Odisha and New Delhi. The first phase of the project was flagged off in September 2023 with the establishment of Common Service Centres (CSCs) at 14 DIAV locations. HDFC Bank under its Parivartan programme, supports in building economic inclusiveness for defence service veterans and their next of kin. Similar to the 14 DIAV locations, the new centres will also provide skill development and training across financial products and services.

DC Reasi inspects Welfare institutions in district

■ HT News Network

REASI, MARCH 6: Deputy Commissioner Reasi, Nidhi Malik today conducted an extensive tour of critical welfare institutions across the district, demonstrating the administration's unwavering commitment to strengthening social support systems for vulnerable populations.

The high-level inspection covered multiple facilities including the One Stop Centre (OSC) for Women, Child Care Institution (Parisha), District Hub for Empowerment of Women (DHEW), District Child Protection Unit, and the Juvenile Justice Board. During her visit to the Shakti Sadan building, Deputy Commissioner had a brief discussion on Detailed Project Report with District Social welfare officer for

comprehensive renovation, aimed at creating a more conducive environment for service delivery. Deputy Commissioner emphasised that These institutions form the backbone of our social safety net and Our primary duty is ensuring that victims of violence receive prompt assistance with dignity and compassion. Every case must be addressed with sensitivity and resolved within strict timelines. DC conducted a thorough examination of living conditions and facilities at the Parisha Home for girls. She emphasized that such shelters must provide not just basic amenities but a nurturing environment where children can thrive despite challenging circumstances. The administration's focused approach reflects its dedication to implementing welfare schemes effectively and ensuring that benefits reach.

Fourth Edition of Fiction Gathering (Mehfil-e-Afsana) Presented by Idaare Tehqeeq o Adab, Jammu and Kashmir

■ HT News Network

Srinagar 06 March- The ongoing online Fiction Gathering (Mehfil-e-Afsana) under the auspices of Idaare Tehqeeq o Adab, Jammu and Kashmir continues to engage literary enthusiasts. As part of this series, the fourth edition of the event was presented on the institute's official WhatsApp page on Sunday. In this session, the short story "Patang, Pann Te Tasveer" (Kite, Thread and Painting) by young fiction writer Dr Ashraf Zia was featured. Renowned intellectual, critic, novelist, and Sahitya Akademi award-winning fiction writer Dr Sohan Lal Koul presented his critique of the story. In his review, Dr Koul discussed the state of contemporary Kashmiri fiction, asserting that it has broken free from traditional constraints and now embraces new

experiments in technique and themes, driven by modern sensibility. He elaborated that contemporary fiction focuses on psychological aspects, loneliness, despair, existential struggles, and the darker corners of the human mind. He described modern sensibility as a complete departure from past thought processes. Commenting on Ashraf Zia's story, Dr Koul noted that it deals with existential crisis and portrays the grim reality of a meaningless life. He emphasised that the aesthetics of Zia's fiction stand in stark contrast to traditional storytelling—his works lack fixed time, place, or characters, which makes them initially challenging for readers to grasp. Esteemed poet and writer Ali Shaidda described Zia's short story as a symbolic and modern narrative, allowing readers to form diverse interpretations. He remarked that "Patang, Pann Te Tasveer" guides human existence



towards its true purpose, intertwining the physical and spiritual realms. Senior fiction writer Raheem Rahbar praised Idaare Tehqeeq o Adab, Jammu and Kashmir for emerging as a credible literary platform. Reflecting on the past, he recalled how the state's Cultural Academy used to fill this literary space 35 years ago by organising two monthly events—one for poetry and another for fiction. These gatherings nurtured many talented fiction writers, including himself. He expressed happiness that the institute is now reviving that tradition. He also lauded Ashraf Zia as one of the key figures elevating Kashmiri fiction to a global literary standard, stating that his stories compel readers to think and leave a lasting impact. Journalist Ashraf Chiragh from Kashmir Uzma wrote that literature embodies the spirit of freedom, and fiction writers play a significant role in shaping a

nation's character. Young columnist Rais Ahmad Kumhar praised the story as a brilliant and insightful creation that inspires emerging fiction writers. Institute member Firdous Faizi appreciated Ashraf Zia's storytelling and Dr Sohan Lal Koul's lucid critique. Young scholar Zahid Zakir described the story as mentally stimulating, requiring intellectual effort and a broad perspective to fully comprehend its depths. Education department official and teacher Wani Nazir congratulated the institute for promoting such literary creations. He highlighted that the story mirrors the voids and meaninglessness arising from fragmented and disconnected struggles in life. He described it as a masterpiece that unfolds gradually, unlocking new dimensions of understanding as the reader delves deeper into its narrative.

DC Kishtwar reviews RDSS Projects, sets deadline for installation of Smart Meters

■ HT News Network

KISHTWAR, MARCH 06: Deputy Commissioner Kishtwar, Rajesh Kumar Shavan today reviewed the Revamped Distribution Sector Scheme (RDSS) in the district.

The meeting focused on smart metering and loss reduction (LR) works, which include AB cabling, High Voltage Distribution System (HVDS), reconductoring and feeder bifurcation/segregation.

At the outset, the DC welcomed the participants and took a comprehensive status update on the progress of the key components under RDSS. He thoroughly reviewed the implementation of smart metering and loss reduction initiatives besides assessing the challenges faced by executing agencies.

Expressing concern over the slow pace of smart meters installation, the DC directed DGM, RECPDCL to expedite the progress to achieve the set targets.

The DC sets April 15, 2025, as the final



deadline for the completion of smart metering across the township and various areas of the district. He further emphasized the timely procurement of materials to avoid delays and instructed officers to ensure a seamless supply chain for ongoing and upcoming projects.

To enhance the monitoring and execution of RDSS projects, the Kishtwar instructed JPDCL to establish a dedicated

Cell at the DC Office Complex. This will facilitate daily monitoring of project progress to identify and address critical gaps efficiently, he added.

During the meeting, the DC also reviewed the power distribution works in remote areas of Marwah and Warwan. He directed the executing agencies to start work immediately in these regions to strengthen the power infrastructure and

improve power supply for residents.

Additionally, the DC instructed the Executive Engineer, JPDCL, to revisit and revise the project plans in alignment with the revised costs and scope of work. He stressed the importance of maintaining quality standards and ensuring timely execution to achieve the objectives of the RDSS. The meeting was attended by CPO Shah Nawaz Bali, DGM, REC PDCL Rishab Jain, Executive Engineer JPDCL Kishtwar Latief Ahmed, Executive Engineer Project Div Doda Rajeev Sharma, officials and representatives of various executing agencies including PGCIL, REC, PIA, PESL, and Vijay Electrical Ltd., Hyderabad among other stakeholders.

The Deputy Commissioner reaffirmed his commitment to ensuring efficient power distribution and reducing AT&C losses in Kishtwar. He urged all agencies involved to work in close coordination and adhere to the prescribed timelines for the successful implementation of RDSS projects in the district.

Deputy Commissioner conducts Agricultural Development Tour in Reasi District

■ HT News Network

REASI, MARCH 6: Deputy Commissioner Nidhi Malik conducted a comprehensive inspection tour of agricultural development initiatives across Reasi district today, marking significant progress in the region's agricultural transformation.

The tour featured the inauguration of a state-of-the-art polyhouse at Bagga, implemented under the Holistic Agriculture Development Programme (HADP). During the event, DC Malik emphasized the importance of documenting success stories to inspire the wider adoption of modern farming techniques among local farmers.

The Deputy Commissioner visited the Fruit Plant Nursery in Dokezibagh, where she planted avocado saplings at the region's first-ever Avocado Mother Block.

The Deputy Commissioner stated that this Avocado Mother Block represents not just agricultural innovation, but a pathway to sustainable livelihoods for our farmers.

The Deputy Commissioner directed the Chief Horticulture Officer to scale up the production of quality plant material for distribution to farmers across the district, reinforcing the administration's commitment to agricultural sustainability and farmer prosperity.

The inspection tour was attended by the Chief Agriculture Officer, Chief Horticulture Officer, and other concerned officials. The inspection tour was attended by the Chief Agriculture Officer, Chief Horticulture Officer, and other concerned officials.

DC Doda reviews progress of Health Department in district

■ HT News Network

DODA, MARCH 06: Deputy Commissioner Doda, Harvinder Singh, today chaired a review meeting of the Health Department at the Conference Hall of DC Office Complex, Doda. The meeting focused on assessing the progress of various health schemes, including the Janani Suraksha Yojana (JSY), aimed at improving maternal and child health in the district.

Senior health officials attended the meeting to present the current status and challenges in implementing these schemes.

During the meeting, the Deputy Commissioner reviewed key health indicators and directed officials to ensure efficient service delivery in a time bound manner. The Chief Medical



Officer, Medical Superintendent of GMC, Deputy Chief Medical Officer, and Block Medical Officers (BMOs) along with BPMUs attended the meeting.

The CMO gave brief on progress achieved on various health indicators like institutional deliveries, sex ratio at birth, number of low birth weight newborns, and progress under Janani Suraksha Karyakaram. The meeting also emphasized

the need for better coordination among healthcare facilities to enhance maternal and child healthcare services. The DC urged health officials to strengthen outreach programs to increase awareness about institutional deliveries and maternal healthcare benefits under JSY. He also stressed the importance of accurate data collection and real-time monitoring to track progress effectively.

Officials were directed to address gaps in service delivery and improve healthcare infrastructure to ensure quality maternal and child care services across the district. The Deputy Commissioner also reviewed block-wise screening of all types of ailments and directed officials to ensure the proper deployment of ASHA workers for screening patients in their respective jurisdictions. He emphasized the need for proactive health interventions to detect and address health issues at an early stage.

The meeting concluded with the Deputy Commissioner instructing concerned officers to submit a detailed report on the implementation of health schemes and measures taken to enhance healthcare services in Doda.

Sensodyne sets a Guinness world record to kickstart 2025 world oral health day campaign

■ Jhangir Malik

Jammu, Mar 6: Sensodyne, a leading oral care brand from Haleon (formerly GlaxoSmithKline Consumer Healthcare), sets a GUINNESS WORLD RECORD™ for successfully attempting the 'most online dental screening tests completed in 24 hours. The record-breaking initiative, held at Maha Kumbh 2025, saw more than 27,000 individuals taking the dental check-up, marking a significant step in educating Indians about the importance of proactive oral care. To further its commitment, Sensodyne also distributed its newly launched Rs. 20 small toothpaste pack, designed to make sensitivity protection more affordable and accessible. This record also marks the beginning of Sensodyne's World Oral Health Day campaign, aimed at encouraging individuals to Take the First Step towards better oral health.

For over a decade, Sensodyne has empowered consumers to recognize and address tooth sensitivity early and has conducted "chill tests" across India. This initiative has helped millions identify their condition, seek timely intervention, and enjoy their favourite foods again—ultimately enhancing their quality of life.



Kishlay Seth, Category Lead – Oral Health, Haleon India Subcontinent, shared, "At Sensodyne, our mission is to encourage people to take the first step towards their oral health. Setting a GUINNESS WORLD RECORD™ at Maha Kumbh 2025 is not just about the numbers—it's about the impact we want to create by reaching thousands of individuals, raising awareness, and encouraging better oral health every day. We are taking this initiative forward by driving education throughout World Oral Health Month and offering free digital dental check-ups. Through these ongoing efforts, Sensodyne continues to elevate the oral health landscape

in India, making oral care education, awareness, and treatment more accessible for all." Dr. Ashok Dhoble, Secretary General Head, Indian Dental Association, shared, "We are proud to partner with Sensodyne in this initiative to raise oral health awareness in India. As the Indian Dental Association, we have always been at the forefront of promoting preventive dental care, and this initiative is an example which showcases the power of education and accessibility in transforming oral health. This effort not only empowers individuals to take the first step towards better oral health but also highlights the importance of early detection and intervention." The screenings at Maha

Kumbh were facilitated by a dedicated team of nearly 200+ promoters, leveraging mobile technology in collaboration with A Dental Friend and Smilo. Over 30 IDA-member dentists were present to oversee the process and address queries, ensuring a seamless and credible experience. With World Oral Health Day approaching on March 20, Sensodyne's initiative sets the stage for a larger movement, integrating education, technology, and accessibility. Building on the success of the record-breaking event, Sensodyne is now extending free digital dental check-ups to the public, ensuring that more people can conveniently assess their oral health. Simply scan the QR code here to check your oral health". In the coming days, Sensodyne will activate a comprehensive multimedia strategy featuring digital campaign, influencer collaborations, Spotify integrations and coverage across TV, radio & print to nudge more and more Indians to 'Take the First Step' for their Oral Health. The brand will also launch dental vans & conduct corporate health camps across the country to enable better access to oral healthcare.

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JKBOSE frames 26 unfair means cases during extensive inspection drive

■ HT News Network

JAMMU, MARCH 06: As many as 26 unfair means cases were framed against the students found indulging in irregular practices during surprise inspections conducted by 20 vigilance squads constituted by JKBOSE to safeguard the integrity of the examinations. The inspections were carried out on the instructions of Secretary JKBOSE, G.H. Sheikh, who supervised the inspection drive.

The superintendents of these centers were directed to be cautious in future and ensure that there is no recurrence of such incidents. The examinations are conducted in smooth and transparent manner, as the invigilator staff has been found quite vigilant in the conduct of the examinations in the wake of strict instructions from the Board.

All the sub and branch offices of JKBOSE participated in the day-long inspection drive, visiting more than 180 centers in order to safeguard the sanctity and integrity of the Board examinations. The JKBOSE reiterates its commitment to fair and transparent conduct of the examinations, while upholding the trust of students and parents in the interest of protecting merit and fairness.

DC Poonch chairs DLC meeting to enhance implementation of Forest Rights

■ HT News Network

POONCH, MARCH 06: Deputy Commissioner Vikas Kundal chaired a crucial District Level Committee (DLC) meeting in Poonch, focusing on enhancing the implementation of the Forest Rights Act (FRA).

The meeting reviewed the status of claims, discussed strategies for outstanding applications and thoroughly scrutinized 206 FRA claims submitted by the Sub Division Level Committee (SDLC).

In a significant decision, the Deputy Commissioner unanimously approved all 206 claims, marking a major milestone in recognizing and safeguarding the rights of forest-dwelling communities.

This development is expected to empower local communities and promote sustainable forest management practices in the region.

DDC Samba chairs DLRC meeting to review performance of Banks

■ HT News Network

SAMBA, MARCH 06: District Development Commissioner (DDC) Samba, Rajesh Sharma chaired the District Level Review Committee (DLRC) meeting, here today at the DC Office.

The meeting reviewed the performance of banks in deposits, advances, CD ratio and achievements under the Annual Credit Plan (ACP) for the financial year 2024-25. Progress under various government-sponsored and social security schemes was also assessed.

The meeting was convened by Lead District Manager (LDM), Samba, Sanjay Dhar and attended by officials from LDO RBI, GM DIC, NABARD, Agriculture, Animal Husbandry, Sheep Husbandry, Fisheries and other key government departments, along with representatives of J&K Bank, SBI, PNB, JKGB and other financial institutions.

During the meeting, the DDC conducted a detailed review of government-sponsored schemes, emphasizing 100% digitalization of bank accounts and urging banks to actively promote self-employment initiatives.

He directed banks to clear pending cases under various government schemes and ensure timely credit disbursement to boost economic activities.

He also stressed the need to cover all eligible beneficiaries under social security schemes like PMSBY, PMJJBY and APY.

On this occasion, the Potential Credit Plan (PLP) 2025-26 for District Samba, prepared by NABARD, was also released. The DDC formally launched the PLP 2025-26, which will serve as a roadmap for enhancing credit flow to priority sectors, fostering economic development in the district.

Training cum Capacity Building Program for Dental Surgeons held in Udhampur

■ HT News Network

UDHAMPUR, MARCH 06: A day long Training cum Capacity Building Program for Dental Surgeons of District Udhampur was organized by District Health Society Udhampur, here at Conference Hall, DC Office Udhampur.

The program aimed to enhance the skills of dental practitioners and keep them updated with the latest advancements in dentistry.

Deputy Commissioner Udhampur Saloni Rai graced the occasion as the chief guest. She emphasized the importance of adopting modern techniques in routine dental practice to ensure high-quality patient care. She urged the dental surgeons to treat patients with utmost compassion and professionalism, ensuring the best possible healthcare services.

Union Ministry of MSME conducts PM Vishwakarma awareness workshop at Ramban

RAMBAN, MARCH 06: MSME-Development & Facilitation Office, field office of Union Ministry of MSME implements various schemes and activities for the benefit of MSME Sector in Jammu & Kashmir. The activities including Entrepreneurship Awareness Program, Intellectual Property Rights Awareness Program, Procurement Marketing Support Scheme Awareness Program, PM-Vishwakarma Seminar, PM-Vishwakarma Awareness Workshop, Entrepreneurship & Skill Development Program, Management Development Program, Reimbursement of Barcode Expenditure, Reimbursement of Stall Charges, To and From Charges, Advertising Expenditure for participating in various exhibitions conducted in all parts of the Country. The PM Vishwakarma scheme is implemented in Jammu & Kashmir with active participation of the Government of Jammu & Kashmir. The scheme is meant for upliftment of skilled artisans of 18 trades who preserve the cultural identity and play vital role in economy of J&K. The scheme offers the benefit like training with stipend, Loan up to 3 lakh, incentive of Re.1 towards digital transaction and toolkits worth Rs.15,000 training has been completed at various centers in various districts of J&K. As per the scheme guidelines toolkits are being given to the Vishwakarmas for enhancing their production levels resulting in higher productivity with enhanced quality with better value for their products. The delivery of Toolkits is implemented with the assistance of India Post. Toolkit delivery has started recently.

Detailed road map has been laid for delivery of Tool Kits at the doorstep of the artisan which includes showing the toolkit to the artisans by open delivery method and recording, uploading of a video with 30 seconds duration before making payment to the vendor of tool kit through DBT.



Double engine govt working together to make Uttarakhand developed state: PM Modi

AGENCIES

NEW DELHI, MAR 06 (UNI)

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday said the double engine government is working together to make Uttarakhand a developed state.

Addressing a public function in Harsil, Uttarakhand, he expressed confidence that the tourism sector will witness rapid growth in the coming years, which will boost local employment opportunities.

The Prime Minister said, "Winter tourism is a significant step in this direction, aiding in harnessing Uttarakhand's economic potential".

Talking about this year's budget, he said, "Provision has been made to develop 50 tourist destinations. This will increase facilities for tourists and will also boost local employment."

He shared that before 2014, an average of 18



lakh pilgrims visited the Char Dham Yatra annually, which has now risen to approximately 50 lakh pilgrims each year.

The Prime Minister announced that this year's budget includes provisions to develop 50 tourist destinations, granting hotels at these locations the status of infrastructure.

"This initiative will enhance facilities for tourists and promote local employment opportunities," he said.

Recounting the recent cabinet decision of

approving the Kedarnath Ropeway Project and the Hemkund Ropeway Project he noted that the Kedarnath Ropeway will reduce the travel time from 8-9 hours to approximately 30 minutes, making the journey more accessible, especially for the elderly and children.

Modi emphasized that thousands of crores of rupees will be invested in these ropeway projects.

Emphasising the government's efforts to ensure that border areas of Uttarakhand also benefit from tourism, the

Prime Minister said, "villages once referred to as the 'last villages' are now being called the 'first villages' of the country".

He highlighted the launch of the Vibrant Village Program for their development, under which 10 villages from this region have been included.

He added that the government has worked to ensure the erstwhile emptied villages of Mana and Jading in 1962, have been restored.

"As a result, the number of tourists visiting Uttarakhand has increased significantly over the past decade," he added.

During the visit, Narendra Modi participated in the Winter Tourism Program after flagging off a trek and bike rally at Harsil, Uttarakhand.

He also performed pooja and darshan at the winter seat of Maa Ganga in Mukhwa.

PM Modi has failed to fulfil his guarantee of cleaning Ganga: Kharge

AGENCIES

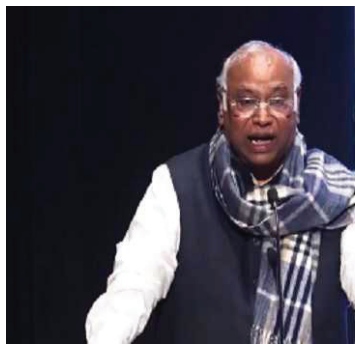
NEW DELHI, MAR 6 (UNI)

Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge on Thursday launched a scathing attack on Prime Minister Narendra Modi, accusing him of neglecting the Namami Gange project and failing to fulfil his "guarantee of cleaning Ganga".

On his social media handle X, Kharge while citing a Parliament question alleged that despite nearly 11 years since the Namami Gange scheme was launched in 2014, Rs 42,500 crore allocated for the scheme, only Rs 19,271 crore had been spent as of December 2024, leaving 55 percent of the funds unused.

He questioned the government's "indifference" towards "Maa Ganga", despite repeated assurances.

The Congress President also criticized the lack of progress in sewage treatment, citing a November 2024 Rajya Sabha reply which showed that 38



percent of Namami Gange projects were still pending. While 82 percent of the total allocated funds were to be spent to build Sewage Treatment Plants (STPs), but 39 percent of STPs are still not completed, and those that are completed are not even operational.

He highlighted the alarming pollution figures in key states such as Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and West Bengal.

Kharge said, in UP, "Seventy five percent of the drains that were supposed to go to STPs, their untreated sewage is directly going into Gangaji, with 3513.16 MLD sewage, being dumped into them. A stag-

gering 97 percent of STPs are reportedly not following environmental rules".

The Congress President further said that in Bihar, 46 percent of STPs are not operational while the rest do not even meet faecal coliform levels. In West Bengal, 40 STPs are not functional and 95 percent do not meet the National Green Tribunal (NGT) norms while 76.16 do not comply with MoEF norms.

He said, "The NGT, in November 2024, expressed disappointment over the deteriorating condition of the Ganga in Varanasi, Modi's Parliamentary Constituency. The tribunal, while reprimanding, even suggested

that a board be installed on the river bank, stating that the Ganga water in the city is not safe for bathing".

The Leader of Opposition in the Rajya Sabha said that a "February 2025 report by the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) found faecal coliform levels to be much higher than the safe limit of 2,500 units/100 mL. It was 11,000 units/100 mL near Shastri Bridge in Prayagraj and 7,900 units/100 mL at Sangam".

Kharge alleged that plastic pollution had surged by 25 percent between May and June 2024, which had further increased the pollution crisis.

He alleged that in the name of Ganga Gram, the Modi government had only constructed toilets.

Slamming the Modi government, the Congress Chief stated that the Ganga is not just a river but India's cultural and spiritual heritage, and accused the ruling dispensation of betraying its commitment to clean it.

SC halts new cases against Udhayanidhi Stalin over Sanatana Dharma remarks

AGENCIES

NEW DELHI, MARCH 6 (UNI)

The Supreme Court on Thursday issued an order preventing the registration of any new criminal cases against Tamil Nadu Minister and Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) leader Udhayanidhi Stalin over his remarks on Sanatana Dharma, unless approved by the apex court.

A Bench led by Chief Justice of India (CJI) Sanjiv Khanna, along with Justices Sanjay Kumar and KV Viswanathan, passed this interim directive in response to Stalin's plea to consolidate all criminal proceedings initiated against him across different states.

"List in April. The interim order shall remain in effect and will extend to any newly added cases. We direct that no further FIRs be registered on the same issue," the Bench stated.

This decision follows an amendment application that highlighted a fresh First Information Report (FIR) filed against Stalin in Bihar.

The issue originated in September 2023, when Stalin made controversial remarks during an event hosted by the Tamil Nadu Progressive Writers Artists



Association in Chennai. He stated:

"Just as diseases like dengue, malaria, or coronavirus need to be eradicated, so does Sanatana."

His statement led to multiple FIRs being filed in different parts of the country. Seeking relief, Stalin moved the Supreme Court, requesting the clubbing of all these cases so they could be addressed collectively.

The Supreme Court initially expressed reservations over Stalin's remarks, suggesting that his statements could be interpreted as an overreach of his constitutional rights under Article 19(1)(a) (freedom of speech and expression) and Article 25 (freedom of conscience and religious practice).

In May 2024, the Court issued notices to multiple State governments and complainants, seeking their responses to Stalin's petition.

During the hearing, Senior Advocate Dr. AM Singhvi, representing Stalin, pointed out that others had made even more controversial statements but had not faced similar legal action.

"In cases like Arnab Goswami and Nupur Sharma, FIRs were consolidated at the outset. Nupur Sharma's remarks were even more inflammatory," Singhvi argued.

Solicitor General (SG) Tushar Mehta, representing the Maharashtra government—where one of the cases against Stalin was filed—strongly opposed the plea, describing Stalin's remarks as highly irresponsible.

"This was an event specifically aimed at opposing Sanatana Dharma. He did not just criticize but called for its eradication, equating it with a disease like COVID-19. If a leader from another state had made a similar comment

about another religion, the response would be very different," SG Mehta contended.

Responding to this, CJI Khanna remarked, "As the apex court, we will refrain from commenting further, as it could influence the trial process."

There were heated exchanges in the court. Senior Advocate P Wilson, also representing Stalin, made a lighthearted remark directed at SG Mehta. "I would like to invite the SG to visit Tamil Nadu and understand our perspective firsthand," Wilson said.

To this, SG Mehta retorted, "These statements were made in your state, but I am addressing the court, not engaging in public debates."

Singhvi remarked, "You seem more passionate than even the complainants in this case."

SG Mehta responded, "Yes, I acknowledge that." Wilson concluded, "You are going beyond your legal mandate."

The Supreme Court has now scheduled the next hearing for April and reaffirmed its interim protection for Stalin, ensuring that no new FIRs related to this issue are registered in the meantime.

Pradhan urges Shekhawat to declare Debrigarh-Bhim Mandal-Hirakud as a tourism circuit

AGENCIES

BHUBANESWAR, MAR 6 (UNI)

Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan has urged Union Culture and Tourism Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat to declare Debrigarh-Bhim Mandal-Hirakud as a tourism circuit.

This, he said, will promote Odisha's tourism sector and strengthen India's position as a hub for heritage tourism.

Additionally, the Union Minister has requested the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) to take responsibility for protecting and preserving the historical site of Bhim Mandal.

Pradhan in a letter to Shekhawat, highlighted the immense potential of Bhim Mandal, Debrigarh, and Hirakud in terms of history, culture, and tourism.

He stated that Bhimmandal, located just 100 km from the Hirakud Dam, is a significant tourist destination in the region.

Bhim Mandal features rock paintings and inscriptions dating back thousands of years. As Odisha's oldest rock art region,



it contains large rocks adorned with drawings of deer, elephants, animal footprints, and bees.

These artifacts indicate early human habitation in the area. The site is believed to be named after Bhima due to its association with the Pandavas from the Mahabharata.

Bhimmandal's historical significance, natural beauty, and mythological connections have attracted historians, nature enthusiasts, devotees, tourists, and adventure seekers.

However, due to a lack of maintenance and conservation efforts, Bhimmandal's ancient rock art site has deteriorated.

Most of the rock art has now faded or disappeared, Pradhan noted, adding that historians,

heritage conservationists, and local communities have been demanding that ASI declare Bhim Mandal a protected monument to ensure its proper preservation.

The Union Minister further stated that for the proper protection and conservation of the Bhimmandal heritage site, ASI's professional expertise and necessary resources are required.

Preserving this ancient historical treasure will be of great importance for future generations, he emphasized.

Similarly, he pointed out that Debrigarh Wildlife Sanctuary, home to diverse wildlife, is located between the Hirakud Dam and its adjacent reservoir.

The site holds archaeological significance, as

tools and artifacts from ancient times have been discovered there, indicating early human settlement.

Debrigarh Wildlife Sanctuary, which has immense tourism potential, has already been included in the Swadesh Darshan scheme of the Union Ministry of Tourism.

Pradhan also noted that the construction style of the Hirakud Dam, the world's largest dam built on the Mahanadi River, attracts tourists with its vast reservoir and surrounding green hills.

This location is well-suited for sustainable and eco-friendly tourism, he said, urging Shekhawat's intervention to declare Debrigarh-Bhimmandal-Hirakud as a tourism circuit. Pradhan visited the historical Bhim Mandal site near the Champali River in Naktideul block of Sambalpur district on February 25.

During his visit, he discussed the site's origin, heritage, history, and authentic data on human civilization with ASI officials.

The fairy tale of Purnapani: From an abandoned quarry to an ecological marvel

BY RINKU BEHERA

ROURKELA, MAR 6 (UNI)

Nestled in the heart of Odisha's Sundargarh district, the Purnapani Limestone & Dolomite Quarry (PL&DQ) has undergone an extraordinary transformation from an industrial mining site to a thriving ecological haven.

Spanning over 230 hectares, the quarry was leased out to the Rourkela Steel Plant (RSP) of the Steel Authority of India Limited (SAIL) in 1960. For decades, it played a crucial role in supplying raw materials for iron and steel production. However, due to the high silica content (SiO₂ >6%) in the

limestone, its suitability as a flux in steel manufacturing was compromised.

Consequently, mining operations were suspended following a decision by the SAIL Board in 2002, leading to an official closure on March 1, 2004. This left behind a landscape marked by mining pits, overburdened dumps, and degraded land.

Instead of abandoning the exhausted quarry, SAIL initiated an ambitious eco-restoration project. The objective was to transform the land into a self-sustaining, ecologically productive ecosystem.

Speaking to UNI, Sibabrata Basak, General Manager (Planning &

Development) & in-charge of Purnapani Limestone and Dolomite Quarry, shared insights into the initiative.

"In 2005, SAIL partnered with the Department of Biotechnology (DBT), Government of India, and the Centre for Environment Management of Degraded Ecosystems (CEMDE), University of Delhi. Under the guidance of Professor CR Babu, a team of academicians and researchers embarked on a mission to restore at least 200 acres of land to its pre-mining ecological state," the official said.

Basak said, "Over the next fifteen years, these efforts bore fruit. The

barren, lifeless land gradually transformed into a lush green expanse, with improved soil quality, reintroduced native flora and fauna, and restored ecological processes. Today, PL&DQ stands as a symbol of corporate responsibility, environmental stewardship, and scientific innovation".

Purnapani's transformation serves as an exemplary model for restoring industrially exploited landscapes. The project illustrates that with careful planning and sustained efforts, even the most degraded environments can be revived to support biodiversity and ecological balance.

He said, "A key highlight of the restoration is the successful conversion of a 200-acre mining-affected area into a three-storied forest ecosystem. More than five lakh grass ramets and over three lakh saplings of 70 native forest tree species were planted. The initiative prioritised indigenous tree species such as Sal, Bija, Sheesham, and Gamhar, while fruit-bearing trees like mango, jackfruit, and jamun were introduced to enrich biodiversity".

Furthermore, the project also supports sericulture, boosting local silk production. Five different bamboo species were cultivated, enhancing both eco-

logical and economic benefits. The restored forest now provides a habitat for diverse wildlife, including native bird species like the Indian Parrot, Common Myna, Bulbul, Kingfisher and Cuckoo.

He said the ecological impact of the restoration has been profound. The newly regenerated forest exhibits high species richness and diversity, closely resembling natural ecosystems. Soil nutrient levels have improved significantly, and erosion has been effectively controlled.

Additionally, heavy metals in the overburden dumps have been immobilized, ensuring cleaner groundwater and surface water.

A remarkable feature of the project is the development of a 30-metre-deep, 200-acre reservoir, which has evolved into a thriving aquatic ecosystem, said Basak.

To enhance biodiversity, phytoplankton, zooplankton and mud samples from nearby wetlands were introduced, along with ten lakh fingerlings in 2019. This once-barren mine void is now a flourishing water body supporting local livelihoods.

The project has also created sustainable economic opportunities for local communities. Villagers now engage in traditional fishing, sericulture, beekeeping, and lac insect

culture, ensuring steady income sources. Self-help groups too have been trained in fish farming and other livelihood activities, strengthening community resilience.

The transformation of the PL&DQ mine showcases the potential of turning mining-affected lands into productive ecosystems, demonstrating that industrial development and environmental conservation can coexist.

The initiative sets a benchmark for sustainable mining practices, proving that with vision and dedication, degraded landscapes can be regenerated for the benefit of both nature and society.

Tackling obesity not just personal concern but a national responsibility: Jitendra Singh

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI

Tackling the rising levels of obesity, which contributes to several health burdens, is not just a personal concern but a national responsibility, said Union Minister of State for Science and Technology Jitendra Singh.

Addressing the 'National Obesity Summit', organised by the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) on the occasion of "World Obesity Day", the Minister emphasised that obesity is not just a lifestyle issue but a major public health challenge that requires coordinated efforts from the government, industry, the medical fraternity and also the society.

"Obesity is a multifactorial challenge and needs multifactorial preventive strategies," said Singh, a Professor of Medicine and a renowned Diabetologist.

"Obesity is not just a personal concern; it is a



national responsibility. As we envision India in 2047, we must ensure that our young population remains healthy, productive, and free from preventable lifestyle diseases," he added. India ranks second globally in childhood obesity, with over 1.4 crore children affected.

"We often take pride in having chubby babies, but this comes at a cost. Central obesity, particularly among Indians, is an independent and a serious health risk factor," he said, while elaborating how obesity significantly contributes to non-communicable diseases such as type-2 diabetes mellitus,

cardiovascular disorders, and fatty liver disease.

The Union Minister acknowledged the Indian phenotype's unique vulnerability to central obesity, citing studies that show even lean-looking Indians carry a higher percentage of visceral fat compared to their Western counterparts.

Singh also expressed concern over the rising prevalence of obesity despite widespread awareness campaigns and medical advancements. "On one hand, we talk about fitness and wellness, but on the other, obesity rates continue to surge. This paradox must

be addressed with scientific rigor and societal commitment," he noted.

The MoS stressed the economic burden obesity places on families, with many patients struggling to afford long-term treatment for metabolic disorders. He emphasised the need for a strategic response and called for an industry-government partnership to develop cost-effective, universal screening models for obesity and metabolic diseases.

"We cannot leave this fight solely to diabetologists or obesity specialists. It requires a national commitment involving policymakers, medical experts, and industry leaders," he asserted.

He suggested a public-private model where routine health screenings include obesity markers, particularly in hospital settings, to facilitate early diagnosis and intervention.

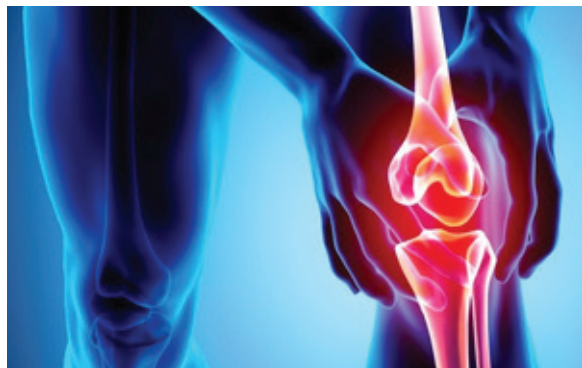
Osteoarthritis, associated disability rising over 130pc globally among women: Study

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI

The global number of cases of osteoarthritis, as well as the disability associated with the condition, have risen by more than 130 per cent over the past 3 decades among women who have gone through menopause, according to a study.

Deterioration and damage of joint cartilage lead to osteoarthritis. It is followed by bony remodelling, joint dysfunction, and chronic pain. In 2020 alone, an estimated 595 million people worldwide were living with the condition, comprising nearly 8 per cent of the world's population, with postmenopausal women at heightened risk.

In 2021 there were 14,258,581 new cases of osteoarthritis; 278,568,950 existing cases; and 99,447,16 years of healthy life lost (DALYs), representing increases of



133 per cent, 140 per cent, and 142 per cent since 1990, respectively, showed the study, published in the open access journal BMJ Global Health.

One reason is that menopause leads to a decline in female hormones oestrogen levels, said a team of researchers from China. The lack of oestrogen affects skeletal health and also impacts the function and stability of the joint system, they explained. Excess weight accounted for 20 per cent of the total years lived with the resulting disability.

"The burden of [osteoarthritis] among postmenopausal women continues to escalate, highlighting its significant impact on [their] global health," said the researchers from the Hangzhou Medical College and Zhejiang University in China.

"There is an urgent need for proactive measures to rigorously monitor and manage risk factors, with a particular emphasis on promoting lifestyle adjustments aimed at controlling BMI. Additionally, policies should be implemented that take into account

socio-demographic disparities, to effectively alleviate the burden of [osteoarthritis] in postmenopausal women," they added.

To better understand the global impact of osteoarthritis in postmenopausal women, the researchers drew on The Global Burden of Disease (GBD) 2021 study.

They analysed data from 204 countries and territories between 1990 and 2021 for new and existing cases of knee, hip, hand, and 'other' osteoarthritis and years of healthy life lost (DALYs) among postmenopausal women, aged 55 and above.

Osteoarthritis of the knee was the most common type and associated with the highest loss of healthy years of life (1264.48/100,000 people), followed by that of the hand and 'other'. Osteoarthritis of the hip was the least common and associated with the lowest rates of DALYs.

Prolonged use of anti-inflammatory pills can prevent dementia: Study

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI

Long-term use of non-steroidal anti-inflammatory (NSAID) medications may decrease the risk of developing dementia, claimed a study on Wednesday.

Previous research has suggested that inflammation may contribute to the development and progression of dementia. The NSAID medications, with their anti-inflammatory effects, can help protect against dementia -- which affects more than 55 million people worldwide.

"Our study provides evidence on possible preventive effects of anti-inflammatory medication against the dementia process," said M. Arfan Ikram, Erasmus MC University Medical Center Rotterdam, in the Netherlands.

The researchers focussed their study on 11,745 adults with an average follow-up of 14.5 years. Of these 9,520 partici-



pants had used NSAIDs at any given time, and 2,091 participants developed dementia.

The results, published in the Journal of the American Geriatrics Society, showed that long-term NSAID use was associated with a 12 per cent reduced risk of developing dementia.

Short- and intermediate-term use did not provide benefits. Also, the

cumulative dose of NSAIDs was not associated with decreased dementia risk, the team said.

The findings suggest that prolonged, rather than intensive, use of anti-inflammatory medications may help protect against dementia.

"There is a need for more studies to further consolidate this evidence and possibly develop preventive strategies," Ikram

said.

A recent study published in the journal Alzheimer's and Dementia: Translational Research & Clinical Interventions, that looked at health data from over 130 million individuals showed that antibiotics, antivirals, vaccinations, and anti-inflammatory medication are associated with reduced risk of dementia.

This finding supports the hypothesis that common dementias may be triggered by viral or bacterial infections.

According to data from the World Health Organization, every year, there are nearly 10 million new cases of dementia -- currently the seventh leading cause of death and one of the major causes of disability and dependency among older people globally. Alzheimer's disease is the most common form of dementia and may contribute to 60-70 per cent of cases.

India's social security coverage doubles to 48.8 pc: Minister

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI

Social security coverage in India has doubled from 24.4 per cent to 48.8 per cent, said Union Minister for Labour and Employment and Youth Affairs and Sports Mansukh Mandaviya. Addressing the post-budget webinar on the theme 'Investing in People', Mandaviya outlined the government's mission to skill and empower India's youth, ensuring that talent in the country makes a global impact.

Citing the ILO World Social Security Report 2024-26, he said "India's social security coverage doubling from 24.4 per cent to 48.8 per cent".

The expansion of the e-Shram Portal, covering over 30.67 crore unorganised workers, and the inclusion of gig workers under Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (PMJAY), reinforce the govern-



ment's commitment to workforce welfare, the Union Minister said.

The government has also integrated 12 key welfare schemes under e-Shram and has made the portal available in 22 Indian languages, he said, adding that to support workers' families.

"Ten new ESIC medical colleges have been approved, with plans for 10 more in the pipeline," he said.

Mandaviya highlighted the roadmap for Viksit Bharat by 2047 and stated that investing in people is

not just an economic decision but a social, moral, and cultural commitment toward an educated, healthy, and empowered society.

Underscoring the success of employment initiatives, Mandaviya said that "17.1 crore jobs were created between 2014-24, including 4.6 crore in the past year alone".

On the other hand, there has been a "significant drop in unemployment rates, from 6 per cent in 2017-18 to 3.2 per cent in 2023-24", the Minister said.

There has also been "a remarkable rise in female employment from 22 per cent to 40.3 per cent in the same period", he added, while crediting these achievements to the government's progressive policies.

Meanwhile, Sumita Dawra, Secretary (Labour and Employment) highlighted major strides in modernising the Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO), including the enrolment of over 6.2 crore new members in six-and-a-half years.

She also mentioned reforms such as centralised pension processing system, auto-settlement of PF claims, and robust IT infrastructure.

Dawra underscored the ESIC expansion -- from 2.03 crore insured persons (IPs) in 2014 to 3.72 crore in 2024 -- and the growing healthcare network across 165 hospitals and 1,590 dispensaries.

Human body's protein recycling system fights bacteria like antibiotics: Study

AGENCIES
JERUSALEM

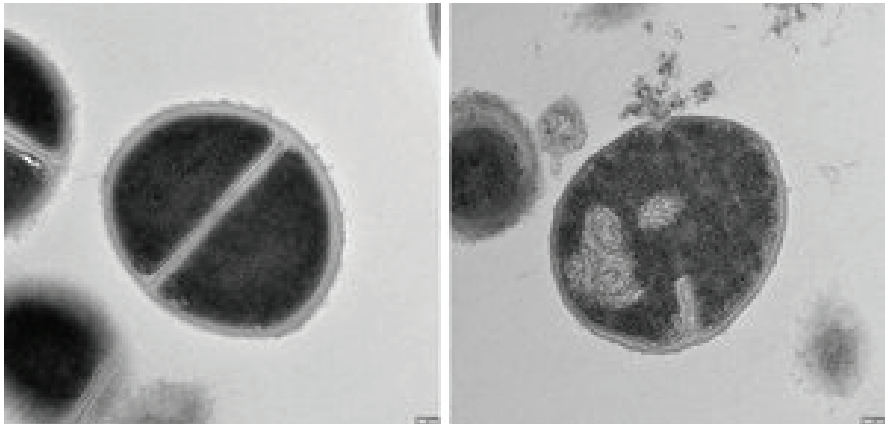
Israeli researchers have discovered a surprising immune defense role of the proteasome, a cellular structure known for degrading and recycling proteins.

The study, published in Nature, could inspire new strategies against antibiotic-resistant infections, Xinhua news agency reported.

The study, led by the team from Weizmann Institute of Science (WIS), found that when breaking down old proteins, the proteasome constantly and regularly releases antimicrobial peptides, Xinhua news agency reported.

These antimicrobial peptides are considered vital components of the body's first line of defense as they attack and kill bacteria.

Experiments showed that human cells with active proteasomes effec-



tively controlled bacterial growth, while blocking proteasome activity allowed infections to spread, WIS said.

In infected mice, proteasome-produced peptides reduced bacteria numbers, decreased tissue damage, and even improved survival rates, performing as effectively as strong antibiotics in clinical use.

The team identified over 270,000 potential antibacterial peptides hidden within 92 per cent of human proteins.

"This peptide database opens a new frontier for developing personalized treatments against infections and other medical conditions," said Prof. Yifat Merbl's lab at WIS.

The findings may open a new frontier for developing tailored therapies to strengthen immune defenses in high-risk patients, such as those with cancer or weakened immune systems.

Beyond the clinical implications, the team said the greatest thrill was discovering a fundamental

cellular mechanism that is regulated by the proteasome and is different from anything previously known.

"This study highlights how technological innovation and basic research intertwine in unforeseen ways. Without the technology that allowed us to analyse the cellular trash, we would not have made this discovery, but when we developed this technology, we never imagined that we would uncover a new immune mechanism," Merbl said.

75 pc of consumers, 97 pc of doctors in India trust AI for healthcare: Report

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI

About 75 per cent of consumers and 97 per cent of primary care providers (PCPs) in India are ready to embrace artificial intelligence (AI)-powered healthcare solutions for tasks such as disease prediction, risk assessment, and diagnosis, a new report said on Thursday.

The report by, ZS -- a leading management consulting and technology solutions firm -- showed how India is on the brink of a healthcare transformation, driven by unprecedented levels of trust in AI.

It highlights that over 60 per cent of Indians are open to adopting virtual care models for services ranging from routine consultations to chronic disease management -- marking a pivotal shift toward digital-first healthcare.

Further, more than 63 per cent of Indians show a strong interest in using AI-



powered health apps for various healthcare needs including awareness, triage, and adherence.

The report also stressed challenges and barriers such as accessibility; increasing pressure on

healthcare systems due to ageing populations; overburdened providers and workforce shortages; infrastructure gaps and fragmented care delivery.

Regulatory frameworks for data privacy and ethi-

cal AI usage also raise significant concerns.

"There is a substantial opportunity for healthcare providers and technology companies to capitalise on the high digital health adoption rate. Leveraging data, AI, and technology can transform healthcare by closing care gaps, enhancing patient empowerment, and enabling healthcare providers to deliver flexible care models," said the report.

It recommended stakeholders collaborate to create integrated solutions that align with consumer preferences and relieve strained healthcare systems.

The report surveyed more than 12,000 consumers and 1,500 healthcare professionals across India, the US, the UK, China, Brazil, and Japan to reveal critical insights into the current market challenges and future opportunities shaping the global healthcare landscape.



Super Cup 2025 set for Bhubaneswar from April 21

AGENCIES

BHUBANESWAR, MAR 6 (UND)

The All India Football Federation (AIFF) has announced that the Super Cup 2025 will be played in Bhubaneswar, Odisha, commencing from April 21. The tournament, featuring a knock-out format, will see 16 teams vying for the coveted title. The competition will include 13 clubs from the Indian Super League (ISL) and three from the I-League. A major highlight of the tournament is that the winners will secure a berth in the 2025-26 AFC Champions League 2 (ACL2) Playoffs, adding further significance to the competition. The Super Cup, which was first held in 2018, has been dominated by ISL teams. Bengaluru FC clinched the inaugural title in 2018, followed by FC Goa in 2019, who defeated Chennaiyin FC in the final.

FIFA to distribute 1 bln dollars in prize money to 2025 Club World Cup teams

AGENCIES

GENEVA, MAR 6 (UND)

World's football governing body FIFA announced on Wednesday that a total of one billion U.S. dollars prize money will be distributed to teams taking part in the 2025 FIFA Club World Cup. The first edition of the 32-team FIFA Club World Cup will be hosted in the United States from June to July 2025. FIFA said its new flagship tournament is expected to generate two billion U.S. dollars in revenue, with one billion being distributed to participating clubs and provision for a solidarity mechanism that will be dedicated to club football across the world. "The FIFA Club World Cup will not only be the pinnacle of club football, but also a vivid demonstration of solidarity that will benefit clubs at large to a scale that no other competition has ever done," said FIFA President Gianni Infantino.

Sachin Tendulkar cracks blazing fifty in IML T20

AGENCIES

VADODARA, MAR 6 (UND)

Cricket legend Sachin Tendulkar turned back the clock with a scintillating half-century against Australia Masters in the International Masters League T20 2025 at the BCA Stadium.

Chasing a daunting 270-run target, India Masters got off to a flying start, courtesy of Tendulkar's vintage strokeplay. The Master Blaster treated the



spectators to a spectacular display, smashing four sixes and seven fours en route to his 27-ball fifty. He took on Ben Hilfenhaus

early on before launching into Ben Laughlin and Xavier Doherty, showcasing glimpses of his iconic aggressive batting.

Earlier, Australia Masters, powered by explosive centuries from Shane Watson and Ben Dunk, posted a mammoth 269/1. Watson, in sublime form throughout the tournament, hammered a 52-ball 110, while Dunk blazed his way to 132 off 53 deliveries, leaving the Indian bowlers without answers.

Tendulkar's dismissal in the 11th over left India Masters struggling at 145/8 in 15.4 overs, and folded for a mere 174 in 20 overs.

Mushfiquir Rahim retires from ODI cricket

DUBAI, MAR 6 (UND)

Bangladesh veteran Mushfiquir Rahim called an end to his One-Day International career on Wednesday.

Mushfiquir took to social media to make his announcement, stating the last few weeks, when Bangladesh exited the ICC Men's Champions Trophy 2025 win-less, were challenging, according to an ICC media release.

"I am announcing my retirement from the ODI format as of today," Mushfiquir's statement read.

"While our achieve-



ments may have been limited on a global level, one thing is certain: whenever I stepped onto the field for my country, I gave more than 100% with dedication and honesty."

Mushfiquir had made

his international debut back in 2005, and his ODI debut came the following year in 2006. Barely a year into his ODI career, he scored a stellar 56* against India in the 2007 ICC Men's Cricket

World Cup, as Bangladesh shocked India at the global stage.

Mushfiquir would go on to achieve several laurels in the format, and also led his side in it. He finished with 7795 ODI runs, with nine hundreds and 49 fifties from his 274 match career.

"The last few weeks have been very challenging for me, and I have come to realize that this is my destiny.

"I would like to deeply thank my family, friends and my fans for whom I have played cricket for the last 19 years."

Olympic preparations: Women's Boxing Nationals from Mar 21



AGENCIES

NEW DELHI, MAR 6 (UND)

The 8th Elite Women's National Boxing Championship, set to be held at Gautam Buddha University in Greater Noida from March 21 to 27, will serve as a key event in India's Olympic preparation cycle, providing a crucial platform for identifying and grooming future champions.

Organised in association with the Uttar Pradesh Boxing Association, the championship will be conducted under the competition guidelines of World Boxing and the Boxing Federation of India (BFI). The event will feature around 300 top women boxers from across the country.

The competition is open to boxers born between January 1, 1984, and December 31, 2005. Each state unit can field

a maximum of 10 boxers. The deadline for entry by numbers is March 10, while final name confirmation must be completed by March 15.

The championship will officially begin with the arrival of participants on March 20, followed by the draw and technical meeting. The opening rounds will take place from March 21 to 24, leading up to the quarter-finals on March 25, semi-finals on March 26, and the grand finale on March 27. As the first national-level event in the new Olympic preparation cycle, the championship will play a pivotal role in shaping India's future boxing stars. It will provide a competitive platform for elite boxers and contribute to the selection and development of athletes for international competitions over the next three years.

Hockey League

Angad Bir Singh shines on senior team debut

AGENCIES

BHUBANESWAR, MAR 6 (UND)

Angad Bir Singh became an overnight sensation after scoring a stunning 'double jalebi' goal during a shootout for the Vedanta Kalinga Lancers against Tamil Nadu Dragons in the recently concluded Hero Hockey India League.

His extraordinary feat came against one of the world's best goalkeepers, David Harte, earning him widespread acclaim and a call-up to the Indian Senior Men's Team for the FIH Pro League 2024/25.

Making his Senior Team debut against Ireland in Bhubaneswar, the 22-year-old forward reflected on the momentous occasion. "I was absolutely thrilled before the match. It felt like the culmination of every-



thing I had worked for," Angad said. He recalled the pre-match announcement by Chief Coach Craig Fulton, which heightened his anticipation. "When the coach announced my debut in front of the team, it felt like something special was about to happen. That moment filled me with excitement."

The young forward, who previously secured Gold at the 2022 Sultan of Johor Cup, Bronze at the 2023 edition, and another Gold at the Men's Junior

Asia Cup 2023, admitted to initial nerves but quickly settled into his rhythm. "For the first minute or so, I was a bit cautious, trying not to make any mistakes. But then I told myself, 'This is just another game. Play your game, be confident.' And after that, I was fully in the flow."

Angad expressed gratitude for the support from senior players, including Manpreet Singh, Hardik Singh, and Sanjay. "They were incredible, always encouraging me to play

without pressure. Manpreet and Hardik were by my side throughout the match, and Sanjay, who plays right half, helped me stay grounded," he said.

Praising Fulton's approach, he highlighted how the coach's calm and supportive demeanour eased his transition. "Before the match, Fulton told me, 'Just play your game and enjoy this moment. Don't worry about mistakes, I've got your back.' That really stuck with me."

On the difference between junior and senior hockey, Angad remarked, "There's a huge difference. At the junior level, it's more about the basics. But in senior hockey, everything is tactical. The game is faster and much more strategic, so I'm constantly learning and adapting."

Barcelona SC beats Corinthians to eye Libertadores group stage

AGENCIES

GUAYAQUIL, MAR 6 (UND)

Janner Corozo scored twice as Ecuador's Barcelona SC edged toward the Copa Libertadores group stage with a 3-0 home win over Brazilian side Corinthians in the first leg of its qualifying playoff on Thursday.

Ecuador international winger Corozo converted a penalty on the stroke of halftime at the Monumental stadium in Guayaquil and Octavio Rivero doubled the advantage with an 80th-minute header after Bryan Carabali's cross.

The host put the result



beyond doubt when Corozo's powerful shot deflected in off the outstretched right leg of goalkeeper Hugo Souza six minutes from time.

"This is a result that keeps our dream alive. It's an advantage. But we haven't won anything yet, and we now have a big game ahead of us in Brazil," Barcelona SC manager Segundo Castillo told a post-match news conference.

The return fixture will be played in Sao Paulo next Wednesday, with the winner on aggregate earning a berth in the 32-team main draw.

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