



### 3-Year-Old Girl Dies After Being Hit by Truck in Kulgam

■ HT News Network

**SRINAGAR, MAR 21:** A 3-year-old girl lost her life after being hit by a speeding truck in the Peerbal Frisal area of South Kashmir's Kulgam district on Friday. An official told news agency JKNS that a truck bearing registration number JK05 AB 9876 hit the girl near her home in Peerbal Frisal. The deceased has been identified as Zainab Junaid, daughter of Junaid Ahmad Sofi, aged 3 years, a resident of Frisal. Police reached the accident spot immediately and arrested the driver. The truck driver has been identified as Umer Rehman Mantoo, son of Ab Rehman Mantoo, a resident of Janjikululla Yaripora. Police have registered a case and further investigation is underway.

### Youth found dead under mysterious conditions in Samba

■ HT News Network

**JAMMU, MAR 21:** A youth was found dead under mysterious conditions in Samba district of Jammu division on Friday. An official told news agency JKNS that a 25 years old youth from Rajouri was found dead under mysterious circumstances near railway line in Sarore area of Bari Brahmana, Jammu. He has been identified as Raja Ibrar Khan son of Abdul Rehman Khan resident of Sarola, Manjakote, Rajouri. Meanwhile police have reached the spot and started investigation in this regard.

### Over 7,000 Bus Accidents Reported in J&K Over Two Decades

■ HT News Network

**SRINAGAR, MAR 21:** Jammu and Kashmir has witnessed over 7,000 bus accidents in the past two decades, with accident numbers fluctuating significantly over the years, according to data from the Union Ministry of Road Transport and Highways. In 2004, the region recorded 1,494 bus accidents, which dropped to 612 in 2008 but later surged to 1,590 in 2014 and 1,583 in 2015. The figures declined again in

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## Terrorism down by 70% in J&K, stone-pelting, shutdown calls now history: Amit Shah

Says 70% decline in terror deaths, 40,000 govt jobs, Rs 12,000 Cr investment created in J&K

■ HT News Network

**NEW DELHI, Mar 21:** Home Minister Amit Shah on Friday said that the terrorism, stone-pelting incidents, and hartals in Jammu and Kashmir have sharply declined under the zero-tolerance policy initiated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Replying to the discussion on the working of the Ministry of Home Affairs in the Rajya Sabha, Union Home Minister Amit Shah as per news agency JKNS said that terrorism, stone-pelting incidents, and hartals in Jammu and Kashmir have sharp-



ly declined under the zero-tolerance policy initiated by Prime

Minister Narendra Modi. HM Shah said that terrorists used to enter from the neighbouring country, and not a single festival was celebrated without fear. After PM Modi came to power, attacks like Uri and Pulwama were answered within 10 days through surgical and air strikes.

Shah said that earlier, thousands would join the funerals of terrorists. "In our term, no one joins. The terrorist is dragged to the last rites at the same place he was killed," he said.

He said that from 2010 to

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## LG Shri Manoj Sinha attends Purple fest lauds resilience of Divyangjan

■ HT News Network

**JAMMU, MARCH 21:** Lieutenant Governor Shri Manoj Sinha today attended the Purple Fest 2025, at Raj Bhawan. The event was aimed at fostering awareness, inclusion and empowerment for Divyangjan.

In his address, the Lieutenant Governor lauded the resilience and talents of



Divyangjan. He assured them of his commitment to build a more accessible and

inclusive Jammu Kashmir. "We have worked with

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## Pvt universities for JK on cards

Higher Edu Deptt awaits official nod

■ HT News Network

**SRINAGAR, MAR 21:** The Higher Education Department of Jammu and Kashmir has framed a draft policy concerning setting up of Private Universities in the region.

The department says that following the approval from the concerned authorities, the policy will give an official nod for the establishment of private universities in Jammu and Kashmir. According to

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## CM laid roadmap for 24x7 electricity, but public support pivotal: Div Com Kashmir

■ HT News Network

**SRINAGAR, MAR 21** Divisional Commissioner Kashmir VK Bidhuri on Friday said that the Chief Minister has laid the roadmap for 24x7 electricity, stating that public support is must to make it happen.

Speaking with news agency—Bidhuri said that judicious use of electricity will help in reducing the damage to the transformers as well as fire incidents. He also said that all arrangements are being made to ensure smooth celebrations of fes-



tivals. On being asked about liquor ban, he said the issue doesn't fall under his jurisdiction but any government decision in this regard will be followed—

## LoP Sharma meets Defence Minister Rajnath Singh Discusses development, security issues of J&K

■ HT News Network

**SRINAGAR, MAR 21:** Leader of Opposition in Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly and senior BJP leader, Sunil Sharma on Friday met the Union Defence Minister Rajnath Singh to discuss developmental and security issues of the Union Territory. As per the news agen-



cy—, Sharma in a post on X, said that he raised key concerns for Kishtwar including the road com-

pletion, land ownership and other issues with Rajnath Singh. He said that the Union

Defence Minister assured him of every assistance needed for the developmental works.

"Met with Hon'ble Defence Minister Sh. @rajnathsinghji to discuss J&K's developmental & security issues. Raised key concerns for Kishtwar, including Road completion, Land ownership, Airstrip Construction & Establish

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## Asia's largest Tulip garden set to open on March 26

'Grand opening unlikely in wake of Ramadan, huge footfall of visitors expected'



■ HT News Network

**SRINAGAR, MAR 21:** With 1.7 million bulbs, Asia's largest Tulip Garden, located at the foothills of the Zabarwan Mountains here, is all set to be thrown open for the general public on March 26.

However, as per the sources, there will be no grand event like previous year on the opening of the garden in the wake of the holy month of Ramadan.

Javid Masood, In-charge Tulip Garden, speaking to the news agency—, said Chief Minister Omar Abdullah will throw open the garden for visitors on March 26 after

a ribbon-cutting function.

Pertinently, the garden witnessed a record-breaking footfall last year. The authorities have now increased the parking capacity to accommodate more rush of visitors.

"We are expecting a huge footfall of visitors this year also," Masood said, adding that 4.5 lakh visitors visited the garden last year in just 30 days. "We are prepared to accommodate the record number of visitors this year as well."

He said 100 gardeners and casual labourers have made hectic efforts to complete all the processes and make the garden ready for the public. With 1.7 million bulbs, the famous Indira Gandhi

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## Gol approves three new medical colleges for J&K, Ladakh

■ HT News Network

**SRINAGAR, MAR 21:** The Union Government has approved three new medical colleges for Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh under the Centrally Sponsored Scheme (CSS) for expanding medical education in underserved regions.

According to the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, Jammu & Kashmir will get new medical colleges in Udhampur and Handwara (Kupwara district),

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## No AIIMS for North Kashmir, Rs 3,532 Cr Allocated to J&K's Health Sector in 3 Years: Gol

■ HT News Network

**SRINAGAR, MAR 21:** The Union Government has ruled out the establishment of an All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) in North Kashmir, stating that there is no such proposal in the current phase of the Pradhan Mantri Swasthya Suraksha Yojana (PMSSY).

As per the news agency—, this was confirmed by Minister of State for Health & Family Welfare, Prataprao Jadhav, in response to a query raised by Member of Parliament Abdul Rashid Sheikh in the Lok Sabha.

Sheikh had asked whether the government was considering setting up an AIIMS in North Kashmir, given that the region comprises mainly border areas with limited a

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## Leech therapy thrives in Kashmir despite modern medical advances

On Novroz, patients turn to traditional treatment for relief from ailments

■ HT News Network

**SRINAGAR, MAR 21:** Despite being dismissed by modern medical science, leech therapy remains a popular treatment in Kashmir, especially on Novroz, when many people believe it to be most effective.

According to the news agency—a large number of people gathered at various locations, including Dargah Hazratbal, on Friday to



undergo this traditional practice. Patients with conditions such as swollen

joints, headaches, frostbite and skin ailments stood in long queues, awaiting their

turn.

Leech therapy is based on the belief that leeches extract "impure blood", thereby relieving various health issues.

Ghulam Mohiuddin Wani, a practitioner with 40 years of experience, claims to have seen people benefit from it. "Many patients have found relief through leech therapy when other treatments failed," he said.

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## BJP's Kashmir torchbearer, ex MLA Faqeer Khan laid to rest in Kangan

■ HT News Network

**GANDERBAL, MAR 21:** Hundreds of people on Friday morning attended the last rites of former MLA and BJP leader Faqeer Mohammad Khan in Central Kashmir's Ganderbal. Khan allegedly died by suicide after he shot himself dead at his official residence in Srinagar's Tulsi Bagh on Thursday.

According to news agency—, hundreds of people, including several leaders, gathered for Khan's last rites in Kangan where he was laid to rest.

The party leaders in J&K saw him as best chance to make inroads into the Valley. However, his death marked an end of that hope, leaving BJP's future in the region somehow uncertain, according to many political observers. Hailing from Gurez valley's Tulail area, Khan's political journey saw him shift affiliations but never step away from electoral

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# International Forest Day

## Javed Rana calls for collective action on conservation, protection of forests

### HT News Network

JAMMU, MARCH 21: Minister for Forests, Ecology, & Environment, Javed Ahmed Rana, emphasized the critical need for collective efforts to conserve Jammu and Kashmir's vast forest cover.

He was speaking on the occasion of International Day of Forests organised by the Jammu and Kashmir Forest Department at Convention Centre, Jammu.

The Minister highlighted the vital role forests play in regulating the climate, providing clean air and water, supporting biodiversity and maintaining ecological balance, which ultimately ensures the well-being of both local communities and the environment.

He said that this year's theme for the day is "Forests and Food" which reminds us of saying of famous saint Sheikh Noor-uddin Noorani, popularly known as Nund Rishi: "Ann Poshi Teli

Yeli Van Poshi" which means Food will thrive only when Forests thrive. "So, protection and conservation of forest resources is inevitable for our food security," maintained the Minister.

Addressing the participants, the Minister asked them to think innovatively for protection and conservation of our forest resources ensuring involvement of local communities and improving their livelihood.

Talking about the flora of Jammu & Kashmir, he said that it is home to an awe-inspiring range of eco-systems ranging from lush sub-tropical forests to pristine alpine meadows. Recognizing this, Jammu & Kashmir Forest Department has proved to be steadfast in its commitment towards afforestation, reforestation and ecosystem restoration that not only enhance tree cover but also promote biodiversity, strengthen local food chain systems and ensure long term sustainability of the forests, he added.



Rana said that the forest department is working tirelessly to reverse forest degradation, integrate agro-forestry practices and align conservation with community well-being. He praised the J&K Forest Department's tireless efforts to bolster forest conservation, promote sustainable

livelihoods and support forest-dependent communities. He also highlighted various livelihood generation initiatives undertaken by the forest department by promoting fodder development in plantation units, promoting eco-tourism through trek routes and eco-parks/nagar vans, liberalization

of NTFP collection and sale, constitution of Biodiversity Management Committees (BMCs) at Panchayat level, etc. He further emphasized the need to plant more trees wherever and whenever opportunities come and advocated people to be stewards of their forests.

Rana said that he is delighted to know that Jammu & Kashmir is going to achieve plantation target of 1.5 crore under the campaign "Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam" during the current year. On the occasion, Rana presented certificates and awards to successful Forester and Forest Guard Trainees of Soil Conservation Training School Miran Sahib and Forest Guard Training School, Doomi, Akhnoor. He also informed that the department is in the process of upgrading training infrastructure in the training institutes besides increasing the capacity of training institutes. He also called for making focused attention towards water stress areas like kandi belts by undertaking concerted soil and water conservation activities. The Minister said that we have to come up to the expectations of the people and ensure the redressal of their grievances. He called upon all stakeholders to join hands with government in its efforts for protection and conservation of

forests for the posterity. Commissioner Secretary, Forest, Ecology & Environment, Sheetal Nanda, PCCF & HoFF, Suresh Kumar Gupta and CCF Jammu, M.K. Kumar also spoke on the occasion. Rana said that he is delighted to know that Jammu & Kashmir is going to achieve plantation target of 1.5 crore under the campaign "Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam" during the current year. On the occasion, Rana presented certificates and awards to successful Forester and Forest Guard Trainees of Soil Conservation Training School Miran Sahib and Forest Guard Training School, Doomi, Akhnoor. He also informed that the department is in the process of upgrading training infrastructure in the training institutes besides increasing the capacity of training institutes. He also called for making focused attention towards water stress areas like kandi belts by undertaking concerted soil and water conservation activities.

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### SHAH

2014, on average, 2,654 stone-pelting incidents took place every year, and 132 organised hartals were recorded annually. In 2024, he said, no one dares to do either. "112 people were killed and 6,000 injured in stone-pelting incidents. Today when there is no stone pelting, who will get killed?" he asked.

On Jobs, Investments, and Industrial Growth in J&K Shah said that from 2019 to 2024, 40,000 government jobs were provided in Jammu and Kashmir. "1.51 lakh self-employment opportunities have been created, skilling clubs are operational, and Rs 12,000 crore investment has already materialised on the ground with MoUs worth Rs 1.1 lakh crore signed," he added.

On Article 370 Abrogation Fulfilled Constitution's Dream Shah said that Article 370 was the base for separatism and was abrogated on August 5, 2019. "The Modi government fulfilled the dream of one Constitution, one flag, and one Prime Minister for the country," he said.

On 70% Reduction in Terror Deaths Shah stated that there has been a 70% reduction in deaths due to terrorism in Jammu and Kashmir during Modi's government, and terror incidents have fallen significantly.

### BUS

2017 to 399 but continued to fluctuate, with 357 cases reported in 2022.

Ladakh's bus accident data was separately recorded from 2021 onwards, with no incidents that year. However, in 2022, 36 bus accidents were reported.

Union Transport Minister Nitin Gadkari, while addressing the issue, highlighted several measures taken by the government to enhance road safety. These include road safety audits, rectification of accident-prone blackspots, and stricter vehicle safety norms. The National Road Safety Strategy has also been extended to Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh to curb road accidents and fatalities.

Authorities have intensified traffic law enforcement, driver awareness programs, and emergency response systems to tackle the issue. Additionally, infrastructure improvements such as crash barriers, better road engineering, and advanced safety technologies in public transport vehicles are being promoted to enhance road safety.

### TULIP

Memorial Tulip Garden will have two more varieties imported from the Netherlands this year.

The visitors can avail the benefits of e-tickets, the garden in-charge said.

Tulip Garden earned a spot in the World Book of Records (London) as Asia's largest in 2023.

In 2024, Asia's largest Tulip Garden experienced an extraordinary surge in tourism, with a staggering 4.45 lakh visitors flocking to witness its vibrant blooms, including approximately 2,000 from foreign shores—

### DGP

should be considered for concessions. "If a person has had a change of heart and deeds, they should be given a fair chance,"

he said.

Addressing concerns over a viral video allegedly showing a Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP) kicking a woman in Qazigund, the DGP announced that a committee, led by the Deputy Inspector General (DIG) of South Kashmir, has been set up to investigate. "The findings are expected within ten days. Three days have already passed," he said, urging people not to give the incident a communal or religious angle.

During the Thana Diwas event in Keller Tehsil of Shopian, locals raised concerns over the frequent halting of fruit-laden trucks at Qazigund, leading to spoilage and financial losses. Farmers and traders highlighted that cold-stored apples have a limited shelf life and unnecessary delays affect their livelihoods. The DGP assured them that the matter would be addressed on priority to prevent further economic distress [KNT]

### UNIVERSITY

the news agency—, Education Minister Sakina Itoo in a reply to the questions in Legislative Assembly on Thursday said, "Higher Education Department has framed a draft policy concerning setting up of Private Universities in Jammu & Kashmir."

The minister further said that following approval from the competent authority, the policy will pave the way for the establishment of Private Universities in the UT of Jammu and Kashmir.

In the meantime, the minister while responding to the queries regarding establishing of satellite campus in the Ramban district through University of Jammu said, "At present, there is no proposal regarding the establishment of a Satellite Campus in the Ramban Constituency by the University of Jammu on the pattern of the Baba Ghulam Shah Badshah University"

The minister however said that a committee has been constituted to assess the feasibility of setting up an 'Offsite Campus in Ramban District keeping in view the requirements.' Presently Jammu and Kashmir have 11 Universities including nine State Universities and two Central Universities.—

### MEDICAL COLLEGES

while Ladakh will have its first-ever medical college in Leh.

The initiative, as per the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), is part of the government's broader plan to strengthen healthcare education by establishing 157 new medical colleges across India, with a focus on aspirational districts and border regions, the ministry said.

It said these new institutions aim to improve access to medical education and address the shortage of healthcare professionals in remote areas.

In addition to the newly approved colleges, Jammu & Kashmir already has five medical colleges in Anantnag, Baramulla, Rajouri, Doda and Kathua, established under earlier phases of the scheme. The government has also approved 196 PG seats and 60 MBBS seats for various medical institutions in the region to enhance medical education opportunities.

The AIIMS project in Awantipora, Kashmir, and AIIMS Vijaypur, Jammu, are progressing steadily, with the government allocating

2,326.23 crore for their construction, the government said.

These two AIIMS facilities are expected to become the primary tertiary healthcare centres for the region, reducing the need for patients to travel outside J&K for specialized medical treatment—

### NO AIMS

ccess to specialized healthcare. In response, Jadhav stated that under PMSSY, two AIIMS have already been approved for Jammu & Kashmir—one in Vijaypur, Jammu, and another in Awantipora, Kashmir. The minister clarified that no additional AIIMS is planned for North Kashmir at this stage.

He added that the Union Government has allocated a total of Rs 3,532 crore to J&K's health sector in the last three years through various central schemes, including the National Health Mission (NHM), PMSSY, and Ayushman Bharat.

The Union Minister said that the funding for the AIIMS projects in Jammu and Kashmir has significantly increased over the past three years. AIIMS Vijaypur received Rs 1,318.06 crore between 2021 and 2025, while AIIMS Awantipora was allocated Rs 1,008.17 crore during the same period.

From 2021 to 2024, Jammu & Kashmir received Rs 3,532 crore in central health sector funding. This includes Rs 1,915.84 crore under NHM for healthcare services, Rs 2,326.23 crore for AIIMS projects in Vijaypur and Awantipora, Rs 202.96 crore under Ayushman Bharat for health insurance, and Rs 18.47 crore for upgrading medical colleges.

The government is also expanding medical education in J&K, approving seven new medical colleges in Anantnag, Baramulla, Doda, Kathua, Rajouri, Udhampur, and Handwara. Additionally, 196 PG seats and 60 MBBS seats have been approved under central schemes for upgrading medical colleges.

Responding to concerns about staff shortages and lack of medical equipment in J&K hospitals, Jadhav stated that funds under NHM are being used to improve medical infrastructure, procure advanced equipment, and fill vacancies in medical and paramedical staff. He added that district and referral hospitals are being upgraded to provide better healthcare services to underserved areas—(KNO)

### BJP

battles. He won as an Independent from Gurez in 1996, later contested assembly elections unsuccessfully on a Congress ticket in 2008 and 2014, and eventually joined the BJP in 2020.

When Assembly elections were held in J&K last year after a decade, BJP saw him as the best bet.

The party's top brass, including Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, campaigned in Gurez, signaling how crucial the seat was for them. But despite a high-pitched campaign, Khan lost to National Conference's Nazir Khan aka Nazir Gurezi by over 1,100 votes. The BJP's first real chance at a breakthrough in the Valley slipped away.

"He stood where many wouldn't," said a BJP leader who had worked closely with him. "He carried the party's hopes in a place where winning was never easy."

In Tulail, where Khan spent most of his life, people recalled his persistence. "No

matter the result, he was always in the fight," said an elder from Dawar.

"He was always among us, whether we voted for him or not," said Mohammad Yusuf, an elder from the region. "He fought battles that most wouldn't dare to."

Khan was always seen as the BJP's bridge in Kashmir," said a senior politician. "When his son Ajaz Raja won the DDC elections from Tulail in 2020, securing one of BJP's only two victories in the Valley, it felt like the party had finally found a way in. He wasn't just a candidate; he was the entry point BJP had been searching for.

A senior BJP leader confirmed that Khan was seen as the party's only real entry into Kashmir during the 2024 Assembly elections.

He said that the BJP high command was confident that Gurez would be their breakthrough seat, with Khan as their strongest contender. "To bolster his chances, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh personally campaigned for him in Gurez, a rare move that underscored Khan's importance for the party. However, despite the heavy push, he lost by a narrow margin," he said—

### LOP SHARMA

ment of Army Cantonment. Sh. Rajnath Singh Ji assured of every assistance needed for the developmental works," Sunil Sharma wrote—

### LEECH THERPHY

Pamposh Ahmad from Srinagar shared his experience: "I spent thousands of rupees on medicines but found no relief. After trying leech therapy, my pain eased significantly," he said.

Unani doctor Ghulam Nabi explained that leech saliva contains bioactive substances like hirudin, which acts as a natural blood thinner. "Hirudin helps in cardiac diseases and has anti-inflammatory, anticoagulant and antimicrobial properties," he said.

While leeches were traditionally collected from local streams and rivers, practitioners now source them from outside Kashmir. The therapy has deep roots in Perso-Arabic Unani medicine and continues to be practised in South Asia and Central Asia.

Medical experts acknowledge that leech therapy can improve blood circulation and help treat circulatory disorders. "Pharmaceuticals have been developed using compounds from leech saliva to treat hypertension and other conditions," they said.

Despite advances in modern medicine, this ancient practice continues to hold significance for many in Kashmir—especially on Novroz—(KNO)

### LG

dedication for empowerment of Divyangjan and major initiatives have been taken in the last few years to ensure dignity, rights and well-being of Divyangjan. I am fully committed about their integration in every aspect of social, economic and cultural life," the Lieutenant Governor said.

The Lieutenant Governor highlighted the key initiatives taken by the government to create a supportive environment for the Divyangjan, fostering their innate potential and enabling them to lead a dignified life.

"We must ensure equal opportunity for

Divyangjan. Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi Ji through reforms made sure that every public or private establishment should follow the equal opportunity policy and systematically address the challenges faced by Divyangjan," he said.

The Lieutenant Governor said, "Divyangjan have immense potential to achieve extraordinary success in life. They are gifted and dedicated to bring positive change in the society. They are not seeking welfare but their rights provided by the constitution.

I have always focussed on policies and decisions which prepare them in a manner that they integrated into the mainstream."

The Lieutenant Governor sought the support of all the stakeholders, civil society organisations to complete the education of Divyangjan in an inclusive environment.

"Education is crucial for Divyangjan because it is the powerful medium which will provide them opportunities for employment and advancement," he said.

The Lieutenant Governor observed that, today skilling is equally important for Divyangjan for their empowerment and to achieve their goals. He said, a multi-faceted approach for skilling and a multiple collaborative effort to make them self-reliant will help the Divyangjan to realise their full individual potential.

The Lieutenant Governor also made a special mention of Para-Archers, Ms Sheetal Devi and Sh Rakesh Kumar. He said their incredible journeys, and sheer determination and unshakable willpower have become inspiration for all.

The Lieutenant Governor impressed upon the officials of Social Welfare Department and other stakeholders for making dedicated efforts for identification of beneficiaries and ensuring 100% saturation of Unique ID Cards for Divyangjan.

He said, the J&K Government has already requested the Government of India for organizing Two Mega Camps for Divyangjans one each in Jammu and Kashmir Division.

The event featured cultural performances and martial art demonstration by the children from Composite Regional Centre Jammu, Directorate of Social Welfare and various organizations. They also presented the Lieutenant Governor with the Mata ki Chunni of Shri Mata Vaishno Devi and hand-made flower pots and bouquets.

On the occasion, the Lieutenant Governor felicitated officials and members of various organizations including Composite Regional Centre Jammu, Jigar foundation, Muskan Charitable Trust, Muskan Foundation Vijaypur, Swami Vivekanand Educational trust, Directorate of Social Welfare, Office of the Commissioner for Persons with Disabilities (PWD), J&K Samaj Kalyan Kendra Jammu, Voluntary Medicare Society Srinagar and Residential School for the Blinds Roopnagar Jammu.

A Pledge to safeguard the rights and interests of the Divyangjan was also administered.

Shri Atal Dulloo, Chief Secretary; Shri Sanjeev Verma, Commissioner Secretary, Social Welfare; Shri Rupesh Kumar, Director, Social Welfare, Jammu; Shri Iqbal Lone, Commissioner for Persons with Disabilities; senior officials, Divyangjan, representatives of various NGOs and civil society members were present.





# BJP voices concern on misuse of privileges, demands dismissal of erring MLA

HT News Network

Srinagar, Mar 21: BJP spokespersons voiced concern over the conduct of the house-members who are trying to disturb the proceedings of the house and causing loss of time and public exchequer. Party takes serious note of baseless allegations, hurling aspersions and stimulating insinuations against the constitutional authority of LG on the floor of the House. The issue was raised by the party spokespersons GL Raina and Dr. Abhijeet Jasrotia accompanied by Dr. Pardeep Mahotra, BJP Media Incharge in a press Conference at party headquarters. "It needs to be underlined that there are certain established parliamentary customs, conventions, etiquette and rules which are required to be observed by members, both inside the House as well as outside, former MLC GL Raina recalled. These are based not only on Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in the Parliament/State Legislatures and Rulings and Observations by the Chair but also on past practices, customs and conventions and precedents and traditions of



Parliament/State Legislatures, which a member is expected to know and be aware of, he added. Stressing the fact that parliamentary privileges are not absolute and are subject to certain limits, GL Raina stated that MLAs are expected to use their privileges responsibly and not abuse them for personal gain or political mileage. We are also aware that it is within the

powers of the House to determine each case. Apart from the Committee of Privileges of the House which may inquire into cases of breach of privilege of the House by its members. Dr. Abhijeet Jasrotia stated that it is responsibility of the presiding authority of the House to ensure that members don't cross limits and in case someone dares to do that action under rules be

taken against the concerned member. It is sad to read that foul language was used against Hon'ble LG by a member of that party which is facing allegations of corruption and scams, Jasrotia asserted. Pointing out that AAP MLA Mehraj Malik has not only dragged office of the LG into baseless accusations but has also hurt religious sentiments of Hindus, he explained that BJP understands that NC is using its alliance partner to divert attention from real issues faced by the people of Jammu Kashmir. BJP expects strict action against the erring MLA for crossing the limit. We in fact demand his immediate dismissal from the Legislative Assembly. Silence of NC on this is self-explanatory. Stressing the fact that parliamentary privileges are not absolute and are subject to certain limits, GL Raina stated that MLAs are expected to use their privileges responsibly and not abuse them for personal gain or political mileage. We are also aware that it is within the powers of the House to determine each case. Apart from the Committee of Privileges of the House which may inquire into cases of breach of privilege of the House by its members.x

## IGNOU Term-End Examination June 2025 to Commence from 2nd June 2025

HT News Network

Srinagar:-The Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) has announced that the Term-End Examination (TEE) for June 2025 for Open and Distance Learning (ODL) and Online Programmes will commence from 2nd June 2025 onwards. The examinations will be conducted in both Pen and Paper mode as well as Computer-Based Test (CBT) mode. The online link for eligible students to apply for the June 2025 Term-End Examination is already open. The schedule, along with necessary instructions and guidelines, is available on the Examination Portal. Students are required to submit their examination forms through the Student Portal on the Samarth Platform at <https://exam.ignou.ac.in/>. The last date for submission of examination forms without a late fee is 20th April 2025. The forms can also be submitted from 21st April 2025 to 27th April 2025 with a late fee of 1100. The university has clarified that the deadlines for submission will not be extended beyond the specified dates. Students must carefully select their preferred mode of examination, either Pen and Paper or CBT, along with their courses and examination centre while submitting the form. No requests for a change of examination centre will be entertained after submission, and the selected courses cannot be modified once the form is submitted. Students appearing for Practical or Lab-based courses, including those enrolled in the BLIS programme, are advised to contact the IGNOU Regional Centre Srinagar for information regarding the venue and schedule of their practical examinations. Dr. Mohd Abdullah, Assistant Regional Director, has urged all learners to complete their examination form submission at the earliest.

## Geology and Mining Department observes World Plantation Day

HT News Network

SRINAGAR, MARCH 21: Geology and Mining Department, Kashmir today organised a plantation drive to commemorate World Plantation Day. The drive was held with an aim to promote environmental conservation and sustainability. Addressing the gathering, Director Geology and Mining, Suraj Parkash Rukwal commended the efforts of employees in organizing the event and underscored the importance of World Plantation Day in fostering environmental awareness. He reiterated the Department's dedication to sustainable mining practices and preservation of natural resources. In his welcome address, Senior Drilling Engineer, Kashmir, Er. Ab. Hamid Wani highlighted the significance of tree plantation in combating climate change, preserving biodiversity, and maintaining ecological balance. He emphasized the role of afforestation in mitigating environment challenges and encouraged all present to contribute towards a greener tomorrow. The plantation drive saw the active participation of officials and staff, who planted saplings at designated locations, symbolizing their collective



responsibility toward environmental conservation. The event also witnessed active participation from students of Government Girls Secondary School Panderthan Srinagar and Delhi Public School, Athawajan, Srinagar, who delivered insightful speeches on the importance of trees in maintaining ecological balance and combating global warming. The program aimed to instil a sense

of environmental responsibility among the younger generations. Students eloquently highlighted the crucial role of trees in purifying air, conserving water, preventing soil erosion, and supporting biodiversity. Their speeches reflected a deep understanding of the environmental challenges faced today and the urgent need for afforestation. Every one commended the enthusiasm and awareness displayed by the students.

## KU's NEP cell holds leadership workshop for college principals

HT News Network

Srinagar, Mar 20: : To strengthen leadership skills and enhance institutional governance in line with NEP 2020, the NEP Cell, University of Kashmir (KU), organised a two-day capacity-building workshop on 'Cultivating Visionary Leadership: Empowering College Principals as Catalysts of Institutional Transformation' at the varsity. Speaking at the inaugural session, Vice-Chancellor KU Prof. Nilofer Khan, emphasized the crucial role of college principals in shaping the higher education landscape. "Leadership training is essential for driving meaningful change in our institutions. This program will equip principals with the necessary skills to effectively implement NEP 2020," she said. Dean Academic Affairs KU, Prof. Shariefuddin Pirzada and Registrar KU, Prof. Naseer Iqbal, in their remarks highlighted the importance of empowering academic leaders with strategic competencies to optimize resources and enhance institutional efficiency. The workshop brought together college principals across the valley. Over two days, participants engaged in five technical sessions led by expert resource persons focusing on leadership development, resource optimization, and policy execution.

## Altaf Bukhari visits Rawathpora Baghat to assure residents that playground will be protected for locals only.

HT News Network

Srinagar, March 21, ANB: Apni Party President Syed Mohammad Altaf Bikhari today visited the Rawathpora area of Baghat Burzulla in Srinagar to assure local residents that the playground land will be protected from takeover by the government for its allotment to some government departments. Notably, the government recently took over a playground in Baghat Barzulla to allocate it to certain government departments. The land had been under a school's possession for nearly five decades and served as a playground for the youth from neighboring areas. When local residents brought this issue to the attention of Syed Mohammad Altaf Bukhari, he strongly opposed the government's takeover of the land. Today, he visited the site and assured residents that the land would be safeguarded from further encroachment. He said, "He took up this issue at the highest level in the government, and I have been assured that the land will not be taken over. In case you see any attempt to take over or construct on this land, you can immediately bring it to my notice. According to the news service Associated News Bureau ANB that The doors of my house are always open for you. We will never allow the government to snatch this land from the local youth. They use it as a playground. This is the only land in the entire area that is being used for healthy and constructive activities by hundreds of our youngsters. I have strongly raised this issue with the government at the highest level and have received assurance for the protection of this piece of land."

## Senior IAS Officer Sushma Chauhan Elevated to Joint Secretary in MHA

HT News Network

Srinagar, Mar 21, : Senior IAS officer Sushma Chauhan has been promoted to the position of Joint Secretary in the Ministry of Home Affairs. A 2009-batch officer from the J&K-AGMUT cadre, Chauhan has held several key administrative positions in Jammu and Kashmir, including serving as Deputy Commissioner of Jammu. Prior to this elevation, she was posted as a Director in the Ministry of Home Affairs. [KNT]

## Forest Protection Force Department celebrates World Arbor Day

HT News Network

Srinagar, March 21: Forest Protection Force Department J&K celebrated World Arbor Day at Gamma Unit K-01 Srinagar under the theme "Forest and Food". During the Day, several activities were held across Srinagar district by Forest Protection Force personnel which include plantation drives, cleaning of Campuses and plastic free drives. The main event was held at FPF Headquarter P.C Depot Srinagar. Besides, a plantation drive was also held in the campus of FPF Headquarter Gamma Unit K-01 Srinagar where saplings of various species viz a viz Chinar & Deodar were planted by staff, kick started by Joint Director Forest Protection Force Kashmir in presence of Deputy Director FPF Srinagar. Later on Joint Director Forest Protection Force Kashmir deliberated upon the history, theme and importance of World Arbor Day. In his speech he highlighted the role of Forests and Tree planting in mitigating the causes of global warming.

## J&K Forest Deptt Observes International Day of Forests

HT News Network

Srinagar, March 21: The Jammu and Kashmir Forest Department, in collaboration with Sher-i-Kashmir Institute of Medical Sciences (SKIMS), Bemina, today organized a plantation programme at JVC campus, Bemina, Srinagar to commemorate the International Day of Forests. The International Day of Forests is observed annually on March 21st to raise awareness about the importance of forests and their vital role in sustaining life on Earth. This year's theme, 'Forests and Food,' highlights the intricate relationship between forests and the food we eat. The plantation programme featured the planting of various species of plants, emphasizing the Forest Department's commitment to promoting sustainable forest management and environmental conservation. The event was attended by officials from the Forest Department, SKIMS Bemina, NGOs and local community members. Irfan Rasool Wani, Chief Conservator of Forests, Kashmir emphasized the essential role of forests in medical science and their contribution to providing a healthy atmosphere. "Forests not only support biodiversity but also play a crucial role in public health by improving air quality



and preventing transmission of diseases," Wani said. Dr. Fazlul Qadir Parry, Principal of SKIMS Medical College and Hospitals, also spoke at the event, highlighting the importance of maintaining green cover inside the Medical institutes as it enhances patient recovery and well-being by reducing stress, anxiety and depression. Among others the event was attended

by Tawheed Ahmad Deva, Conservator of Forests, Srinagar Circle and Regional Wildlife Warden, Kashmir, Mehraj Din Malik, Joint Director Forest Protection Force, Kashmir, DFO Urban Forestry Division, Srinagar Dr. Shiekh Mehraj, DFO Planning and Publicity Division, Danish Khan, DFO Agroecology, Kashmir, Syed Himayun Qadri and other senior officers of SKIMS and Forest Department. The

International Day of Forests is observed annually on March 21st to raise awareness about the importance of forests and their vital role in sustaining life on Earth. This year's theme, 'Forests and Food,' highlights the intricate relationship between forests and the food we eat. The plantation programme featured the planting of various species of plants, emphasizing the Forest Department's commitment to promoting sustainable forest management and environmental conservation. The event was attended by officials from the Forest Department, SKIMS Bemina, NGOs and local community members. Irfan Rasool Wani, Chief Conservator of Forests, Kashmir emphasized the essential role of forests in medical science and their contribution to providing a healthy atmosphere. "Forests not only support biodiversity but also play a crucial role in public health by improving air quality and preventing transmission of diseases," Wani said. Dr. Fazlul Qadir Parry, Principal of SKIMS Medical College and Hospitals, also spoke at the event, highlighting the importance of maintaining green cover inside the Medical institutes as it enhances patient recovery and well-being by reducing stress, anxiety and depression.



EDITORIAL

CM’s statement about advertisements rekindles hopes among media houses

Chief Minister Omar Abdullah’s statement in the legislative assembly that there would be no bias and discrimination in distribution of advertisements among the newspapers has rekindled hopes among the newspaper owners that the system would be back on track. Over the past few years the distribution of advertisements has become talk of the town especially among the people associated with the fourth estate. Complaints regarding unfair distribution of advertisements are coming in from both Kashmir and Jammu divisions of the union territory.

There is no denying the fact that distribution of advertisements has been unfair with a few media houses getting the lion’s share with the other media houses being forced to feel the heat. Many of the leading newspapers at Srinagar and Jammu are not being given the government advertisements and as such they are facing huge losses. Astonishingly some of the lesser known newspapers are getting the advertisements while those having a say among the masses have been left out in this regard.

The stoppage of government advertisements meant huge financial losses for the media organizations with the owners being forced to cut down the size of their employees. As a result of this hundreds associated with the media industry were left jobless and as on date they don’t have any job or work to do. Professionals of different fields are at a loss as to how to cope up with the present situation and these people are facing huge problems in making the two ends meet.

Many seasoned journalists have said goodbye to the field of journalism and they have shifted to fields that were alien to them. This is a disturbing trend and the unfortunate part is that the people who could have motivated to stay put failed to do so. Many other young journalists who could have become assets for the nation were forced to shift out to other places so as to secure their future. In such a way many young and fertile brains are giving their best to the place that is quite strange to them.

The media industry needs to be strengthened in Jammu & Kashmir and the same is possible only when journalists and other professionals associated with this field are given secured, well earned and respected jobs. Once the advertisements are distributed in a fair manner then the media houses would work on the professional lines as was being done in the past and the journalism would grow across the union territory.

Creating an Inclusive Kashmir: Embracing Children with Special Needs

SHEIKH LAIQA  
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In the heart of Kashmir, known for its breath taking beauty and rich culture, there exists a quiet struggle which many overlook: the challenges faced by children with special needs. These children, often labelled as “different,” are more accurately described as neurodivergent, each with unique abilities, perspectives, and potential. Yet, societal barriers and misunderstandings continue to overshadow their opportunities to thrive.

As someone deeply committed to inclusive education, I am familiar with the struggles and strengths of children with special needs. Unfortunately, many neurotypical students and even some staff members in schools fail to understand what it truly means to be a child with special needs. The term “special” is often used mockingly, and some children are laughed at for simply being who they are. While some students and teachers have shown genuine care and a desire to understand, others remain unaware. However, this ignorance is not entirely their fault. Awareness, empathy, and education are lacking and these are the very tools we need to build a more compassionate society.

The Role of Society and Government

Creating an inclusive and barrier-free environment is not solely the responsibility of educators or parents; it is a collective duty. The government must take active steps to ensure accessibility in public spaces, schools, and workplaces. Physical barriers such as inaccessible buildings and social barriers like stigma must be addressed through policies and community programs.

Institutions working for children with disabilities in Kashmir are doing commendable work, but more needs to be done. Too often, services become profit-driven rather than purpose-driven, prioritizing financial gain over the quality care and education these children deserve. We must remember that our work should be done with sincerity, for the sake of Allah and for the genuine betterment of these children.

Parents’ Greatest Concern: The Fear of the Future

One of the most heartfelt concerns shared by nearly every parent I’ve met is the future of their child after they are gone. Their greatest fear is that their child will suffer or become dependent on others. They hope, above all else, that their child can grow to be self-reliant and independent. This is a goal that we, as a society, must support. Little by little, step by step, we must help these children develop life skills and confidence to navigate the world with dignity.

The Importance of Accurate Diagnosis and Knowing Your Rights

Early and correct diagnosis is critical for children with special needs. It allows parents and educators to understand the child’s unique needs and provide appropriate support.

Without proper diagnosis, many children may not receive the interventions they need, affecting their growth and learning. Additionally, parents must be aware of their rights and their children’s rights—access to inclusive education, therapy, and healthcare is not a privilege but a right. Knowing these rights empowers families to seek the best support for their child.

Creating Safer Spaces Through Awareness And Action

As an Inclusive education specialist and advocate, my personal goal has always been to prioritize the safety and well-being of my students above all else, even before their learning goals. Only when they are physically and emotionally safe can they truly thrive and learn. Unfortunately, children with special needs often face bullying and even physical harm—both at school and in their communities. This is heart breaking and often a result of our negligence as teachers, caregivers, and members of society. We must be vigilant and attentive to the environments where these children spend their time. Unsafe surroundings can lead to accidents and preventable mishaps. It’s essential to create safe and supportive spaces for them, whether at home, in school, or in public places.

I would also like to acknowledge the inspiring efforts

like the Save Kids Initiative launched and led by Dr. Raashid Fazili. This initiative aims at raising awareness about why and how parents and other caregivers in families and communities must prevent accidents and mishaps involving children. We must learn from such movements and commit to making our behaviours as well as environments safer and more inclusive for children with special needs.

A Painful Reality: The Need for Awareness and Kindness

I recall speaking to a mother whose child has Global Developmental Delay (GDD). She shared how a neighbourhood child wanted to play with her son, but his mother discouraged it, saying, “He is not normal.” Imagine the pain of hearing such words. As adults, we must reflect on what we are teaching our children. Are we fostering empathy or prejudice? Why aren’t we taking the time to understand disabilities and, at the very least, teaching our children to be kind?

Breaking Misconceptions and Harmful Taboos

Another critical issue in our society is the harmful belief that disabilities are a curse, a punishment from Allah, or even the result of black magic. These misconceptions create unnecessary fear, stigma, and shame, isolating families who are already struggling.

Disabilities are not punishments—they are part of human diversity. Every individual, regardless of their abilities, is a creation of Allah and deserves respect, dignity, and love.

We must work actively to break these stereotypes and educate our communities.

Not All Disabilities Are Visible

It is also important to understand that not all disabilities are visible. Disabilities can be physical, intellectual, developmental, or emotional. Some may be obvious, while others are hidden, making it even harder for people to recognize and understand them. This is why spreading awareness is so crucial.

Additionally, getting the correct diagnosis is essential for early intervention and proper support. Parents must be aware of their rights and their children’s rights so they can access the neces-

sary resources and support systems.

Islamic Teachings on Compassion and Inclusion

Islam teaches us the importance of compassion, kindness, and justice. Allah (SWT) says in the Qur’an: “We have created you from male and female and made you peoples and tribes that you may know one another. Surely the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you. Allah is truly All Knowing, All Aware.” (Surah Al-Hujurat, 49:13)

The value of a person lies not in their appearance or abilities but in their righteousness and deeds. Our beloved Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said: “Indeed, Allah does not look at your appearances or wealth, but rather He looks at your hearts and deeds.” (Sahih Muslim 2564)

These teachings remind us that every individual deserves dignity, respect, and love.

Disabilities are not flaws but opportunities to witness resilience, creativity, and strength.

What We Can Do Together

Raise Awareness: Schools and communities should educate children and adults about disabilities. Understanding leads to empathy, and empathy leads to action.

Encourage Inclusion: Create opportunities for children with special needs to engage in academic and social activities alongside their peers.

Challenge Discrimination: Speak out against discriminatory behaviour. Promote a culture of respect.

Break Misconceptions and Taboos: It is essential to transform the unhealthy attitudes rooted in misconceptions and taboos about children with special needs.

Embracing a positive outlook that views these needs as God-given opportunities to earn His pleasure and reward can encourage the provision of quality care and support for these uniquely gifted children.

Support Parents: Parents need more than just resources—they need emotional and psychological support. Counselling services, guidance from psychologists, and encouragement from family members can help them feel that they are not alone. Families must come together to

reassure parents that it’s okay to seek help and that they have a strong support system.

Demand Action: Urge the government to implement policies for barrier-free infrastructure and inclusive education.

Taking Meaningful Action: After reading this, don’t let these words remain words.

Act on them. Reach out to your neighbours, relatives, or anyone around you—whether in your community, at school, or while traveling. If you see someone with a disability, offer support respectfully and only if they ask for help. Unsolicited help can sometimes feel uncomfortable. Educate yourself about different disabilities and think deeply about how you can contribute in meaningful ways.

A Collective Responsibility:

As a community, our strength lies in how we support and uplift one another. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) beautifully said: “The example of the believers in their affection, mercy, and compassion for each other is that of a body. When any limb aches, the whole body reacts with sleeplessness and fever.” (Sahih Bukhari) Let us become that compassionate body, working together to ensure that no child feels excluded or unloved. Inclusion is not a one-day effort; it is a mindset and a responsibility we must carry every day. Let us teach our children, remind our elders, and hold our institutions accountable. Let our actions reflect the mercy and kindness that Islam teaches us. Together, we can build a society where every child, regardless of their abilities, feels valued, loved, and empowered to thrive. It’s never too late to do something, be the reason someone smiles today. A motto I deeply connect with and carry with me every day is- “People are for People.” Another principle I hold close to my heart is “Always do good to others for Allah’s sake and you won’t regret it.” Such reminders inspire me and you to support and uplift others with love and compassion. May we all strive to be the reason someone smiles today. May Allah bless us with patience, gratitude, and unity as an Ummah. May He guide and bless our efforts. Ameen!

Jazakum Allahu Khairan

Not every hand you shake is a Friend



BY AUBAID AHMAD AKHOON  
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"When the night is darkest, you will see who truly shines."

Life has a way of revealing the truth when we least expect it. We often count the people around us, mistaking their presence for genuine companionship. But when storms rage and the tides of fate turn, we realize who truly stands with us—not just in our moments of triumph but in the silence of our struggles.

This is the story of Ali—or perhaps, it is the story of all of us.

The Celebration of Friendship

Ali was a man of warmth, known for his open heart

and generous nature. His home was always welcoming, a haven for friends, family, and even acquaintances. He believed in the beauty of togetherness, in the laughter shared over a cup of tea, in the support exchanged in both joy and sorrow.

One day, fortune smiled upon him—he received a long-awaited promotion at work. It was a moment of pride, a reward for years of dedication and effort. To celebrate, he planned a grand gathering, inviting everyone he knew. His house buzzed with excitement. Laughter echoed in the halls, praises showered upon him, and friendships seemed stronger than ever.

That night, Ali felt like the richest man alive not because of his promotion, but because of the people surrounding him. He believed he had built relationships that would last a lifetime.

The Test of Time

But life, as it often does, had another lesson in store. Just a

week later, disaster struck. A major financial setback left Ali struggling, his dreams shaken. The same phone that once rang with congratulatory messages now remained silent. He reached out to those who had raised their glasses in his honor, hoping for even a word of support.

Most never responded. Some offered sympathy, but from a distance. Others vanished altogether. The vibrant crowd from his celebration had dissolved into shadows.

And yet, there were a few—just a handful—who stood by him. Those who had never sought the limelight, who had not attended the celebration, who had never asked for anything in return. They extended their hands without hesitation, not offering mere words but unwavering support.

That night, as Ali sat among these true friends, a realization dawned upon him.

The Reality of Friendship

"Mussebat mein jo kaam aaye wahi sachcha yaar hota

hai,

Jo sirf baaton se behlaye woh faqat izhar hota hai."

"The one who stands by you in trouble is the true friend,

The one who only comforts with words is merely an expression."

This couplet holds a mirror to reality. Friendship is not about grand declarations or elaborate gestures; it is about standing firm when the ground beneath you crumbles. In times of ease, everyone calls themselves a friend, but true loyalty is revealed in hardship.

Those who merely offer words without action are like fleeting clouds—visible for a moment but of no real help. A true friend is the one who holds your hand when the world turns its back.

A Lesson for a Lifetime

Ali's experience is not unique—it is the silent truth many of us come to realize. Life isn't about the number of people who celebrate with you; it is about the ones who

remain after the applause fades. It is easy to be a friend in sunshine, but the true test lies in standing together in the storm.

Those who walk beside you when the path is rough, when there is nothing to gain, are the ones who truly care. Ali's journey serves as a powerful reminder: True friends are not those who fill your space with noise, but those who stay in the silence of your hardships. They are not the ones who appear in moments of victory but the ones who refuse to leave in moments of loss.

The next time you count your friends, do not count them in moments of joy—count them in times of despair. The brightest stars are not seen in daylight but shine the most in the darkest of nights.

Hafeez Hoshiarpuri, a renowned poet and one of the most prominent voices in Urdu poetry, aptly captured this reality in a single couplet: "Dosti aam hai lekin ae

dost,

Dost milta hai badi mushkil se."

"Friendship is common, but oh my friend,

A true friend is found with great difficulty."

True friendship is a rarity. While the world is filled with people who call themselves friends, finding someone who remains steadfast, loyal, and selfless in times of need is a treasure beyond measure. A crowd can surround you in happiness, but only a rare soul will walk with you in sorrow.

Tailpiece

Perhaps, as you read this, you are reminded of someone in your life—someone who stayed when they had every reason to leave, someone who offered their shoulder when the world turned cold.

If you have such a person, cherish them. And if you do not, then remember this: become the friend you wish to have. For in a world where friendship is common, true friends are indeed found with

great difficulty.

Seemab Akbarabadi, another brilliant poet, encapsulates this sentiment in his thought-provoking couplet:

"Kahani meri rodaad-e-jahan maloom hoti hai,

Jo sunta hai usi ki daastan maloom hoti hai."

"My story seems like the tale of the world,

To the listener, it feels like their own story."

This verse beautifully reflects how our experiences of friendship and betrayal often resonate universally. We see our own reflections in the stories of others, for the emotions they evoke are deeply human. Ali's story is not just his own; it is the silent cry of many hearts that have learned the true measure of friendship.

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# Muntazir Momin Wani : The Voice of Kashmir, A Luminous Star in Literature and Journalism



REYAZ RABBANI KASHMIRI

Muntazir Momin Wani,a distinguished columnist,writer,and content creator,hails from Bahrampora,Chokar, in the Tangmarg region of Baramulla district,North Kashmir. Although currently residing and working in Qatar,he has maintained a deep connection with his Kashmiri roots through his literary and social endeavors.

Muntazir Momin's academic journey is extensive and impressive.He holds postgraduate degrees in Clinical Psychology,English,and Kashmiri.His early education began at Government Middle School Bahrampora, followed by higher secondary schooling at Hardu Shoor.He pursued higher studies at Degree College Bemina and the University of Kashmir,laying a strong foundation for his multifaceted career.

He has authored two significant books "Azak Baman Pagahuk Gulab"and "Fikr-e-Iqbal".These works reflect his profound intellectual insight and creative brilliance,captivating a diverse readership. His writings often delve into themes of social justice,cultural identity,and personal introspection,solidifying his place in contemporary Kashmiri literature.

Muntazir Momin's contributions to column writing are widely acknowledged.His articles, rich in deep analysis and eloquence,shed light on social,educational and governmental issues.He has been particularly vocal against the rise of self-proclaimed "Facebook journalists" who,lacking formal journalistic training,propagate misinformation.His advocacy for responsible and credible journalism has garnered public support and sparked crucial discussions on journalistic ethics in the digital age.

Beyond his literary pursuits,Muntazir Momin is an active digital content creator. Through various online platforms,he engages in meaningful discussions on pressing social issues, aiming to educate and involve the



public in matters of societal importance.His content frequently emphasizes educational reforms, governance,and ethical concerns, reflecting his commitment to social progress. For instance,his video released on World Radio Day,February 13, 2025, highlights his dedication to promoting cultural and educational awareness.

Muntazir Momin's advocacy extends beyond traditional media.He has played a pivotal role in highlighting the challenges faced by the Kashmiri community,both locally and globally. His relentless efforts in promoting ethical journalism,educational reforms,and social justice have left a lasting impact.Through his writings and digital presence,he continues to pave the way for meaningful dialogue and positive change.

Montazir Momin Wani exemplifies the modern intellectual,bridging the gap between traditional literary forms and contemporary digital platforms.His passion for literature,journalism, and social advocacy not only strengthens Kashmiri culture but also serves as a catalyst for positive transformation within the community.As he continues his endeavors,Wani is poised to remain a vital voice championing education,responsible media,and social justice.

# PM Modi's Mauritius Trip

OMKAR DATTATRAY

There is much closeness between India and Mauritius due to cultural and religious affinity and this closeness has been strengthened by political initiatives and bilateral ties between the two nations right from India's independence journey.Indian and Mauritius inked many agreements from time to time to foster goodwill ,friendship and political and economic ties and the two countries are close friends which benefits both countries.PM Modi arrived in Port Louis ,Mauritius on Tuesday -11 February 2025 where he was accorded a ceremonial welcome.Mauritius prime minister Navin Ramgoolam personally received him at the airport ,reflecting the strong ties between the two nations.Members of the Indian community gathered at the airport to catch a glimpse of the Indian leader. Prime minister departed for Mauritius late Monday night for a two day state visit ,during which he attended the Mauritius's National Day celebrations as the chief guest on March 12.MEA emphasized the significance of the,visit in strengthening India-Mauritius ties.Modi has been conferred The Grand Commander of the Order of the Star and Key the Indian Ocean ,the island nation's highest civilian honour.Terming Mauritius as a bridge between India and the Global South ,PM Modi Tuesday -March 11,2025 said that the Island nation is part of India's family and not just a partner country.Modi commenced his two-day state visit to Mauritius with a ceremonial welcome in Port Louis on Tuesday.Modi began his visit to the island nation with sapling planting ceremony at Sir Seewoosagar Ramgloom Botanical ,alongside his Mauritius counterpart Navinchandra Ramgoolam.Mr Modi paid homage at concrete 'Samadhi'of Sir Seewoosagar Ramgloom ,the founding father of Mauritius and at 'Samadhi' of Anrerood jugnauth former president



and prime minister of Mauritius.Later he met president of Mauritius Dharam Gokhool and gifted him Gangajal from Mahakumbh.The Indian prime ministers this visit is a reminder that India-Mauritius ties need to remain firm in today's uncertain world. In our current era of geopolitical churn and uncertainty ,PM Narendra Modi's visit to Mauritius -March 11-12 ,2025 is a celebration of the deep and long standing ties between the two countries .Modi had last visited the island country in 2015 ,but on this occasion ,he was the guest of honor at its independence Day celebrations on March 12.India-Mauritius relations have enjoyed political consensus ,irrespective of the party in power in either country. Mauritius has a new government in power led by Navinchandra Ramgoolam of the Labour Party ,whose coalition won a landslide victory in the elections held in November 2024.While India-Mauritius relations continue to be positive and stable ,the visit provides an opportunity to Mr.Modi to establish a personal connect with Mr.Ramgoolam and reassure him of India's continuing support to the islands security and prosperity.There is no doubt that Ramgoolam will prove to be a trusted partner for India and will open new vistas for our cooperation. In a strategic outreach to the new leadership in Mauritius

,PM Modi met newly -elected Prime Minister Navinchandra Ramgoolam and president Dharam Gokhool Tuesday as he began his two -day visit to the island nation. The engagement with the new leadership is important in the context of the Indian government's involvement in developing infrastructure in Mauan ritius under the governments led by Anerood and Pravind Jugnauth.Delhi is now making an effort to reach out to new regime led by Ramgoolam. Mauritius has been ruled by the Ramgoolams and Jugnauths ever since the country became independent in 1968.Speaking at an event for the Indian diaspora in Port Louis,which was also attended by Ramgoolam ,Modi underlined India's role as "trusted ally in combating illegal fishing ,piracy ,and maritime crimes."As a reliable friend ,India works with Mauritius to protect its national interests and secure the Indian Ocean region.PM said Mauritius is not just a partner country .For us ,Mauritius is a family.He further said,"This bond is deep and strongly rooted in history ,heritage and the human spirit."We are looking forward to making businesses easier to do,less bureaucracy ,less red tape.Ramgoolam announced the conferment of his country's highest civilian award ,the Grand Commander of the Order of the Star and Key of the Indian

Ocean,on Modi.This prestigious accolade marks Modi as the first Indian and only fifth global recipient of the award ,recognizing his contributions to strengthening India-Mauritius relations.During the meeting with president Gokhool ,the two leaders exchanged views on deepening the special and close bilateral ties."Had a great meeting with His Excellency Mr.Gokhool ,president of Mauritius.He is well acquainted with India and Indian culture.Expressed gratitude for inviting me to be part of the National Day celebrations of Mauritius .We discussed how to further boost bilateral ties across diverse sectors,"Modi said in a post on X.India and Mauritius on Wednesday elevated their ties to an enhanced strategic partnership and inked eight pacts to boost cooperation in several sectors including trade and maritime security even as PM Modi unveiled an ambitious vision for the development of the Global South.The agreements inked will provide for promoting the use of national currencies for cross boarder transactions ,sharing of maritime data,joint work in combating money laundering and enhancing cooperation in the MSME.PM Modi warpped his two day visit to Mauritius and came back home with good memories of his visit.

The author is a columnist,social,KP activist &Freelancer

# Charming beauty of spring



SAHIL MANZOOR  
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Some like winters, some like flurries of snow, some like winter dishes, some like Kashmiri harissa, some like rain, and some like spring. Season means different people have different choices.

So the beautiful spring has entered its footsteps with the sunny day of 21st March.

The Nowruz festival is celebrated every year on 21st March. This day has great importance for the former, and this day inaugurates the plantation in every corner of the valley.

It's true or a myth, but I had too much experience with it that people used to bathe with cold tap water and some bathed in rivers. This day indicates that winters are no more.

Spring is one of the most mesmerizing, endowed, luscious, and alluring seasons in the Kashmir Valley. Spring attracts millions of tourists from all corners of the world and caters to their natural beauty. Not only spring, but all

four seasons in Kashmir Valley are so endowed and sensuous for the tourists and also for the natives of the valley. The spring season starts from the 21st of March to the 21st of June, or, I can say, from the arrival of Navroz. In Kashmir Valley, the farmers start planting trees, grafting, and farming land, mostly in all parts of the valley, with the arrival of spring. Spring has great and immense importance for the farmers in Kashmir.

Orchard owners start fumigating their orchards during this season with different pesticides, etc. All around us, we can see blossoms on trees. The growth of plants starts again. Every little to big tree looks whitish, golden, red, brown, etc., due to the blossoms. This season brings beauty to gardens. As all the flowers, trees, and plants look so mesmerizing and beautiful, we can see that all the flowering trees and plants are quite fresh and alive due to their outlook.

Every season in the valley is so endowed, which attracts tourists from all corners of the world, provides them with a truly beautiful environment, and makes them feel joyful and freshens their thoughts.

Why is spring so special for natives and foreign tourists?

Asia's largest tulip garden is in the lap of the Zabarwan Mountains and attracts millions of tourists every year. Tulip Garden opens for tourists

every year since the arrival of spring and remains open for a month or more, depending on the bloom of tulips. Tulip Garden is emerging year after year. The floriculture department introduces new varieties and keeps all the possible facilities available for tourists in the garden. Tulip Garden looks artificial, but no one can deny that every bit of land in the area is quite real and natural. Tulip Garden is sensuous and beautiful; everyone who falls in love with its endowed beauty wants to spend his precious moments and capture beautiful memories with the camera.

Not only tulip gardens, but there are a number of Mughal gardens here in Kashmir that were built and designed by the Mughal Empire. The gardens are Nishat, Shalimar, Chashma Shahi, Pari Mahal, Harvan, and Verinag (Verinag spring is the origin of the Jhelum river in the valley) in district Anantnag, and there are so many beautiful and historical shrines, masjids, and temples in Kashmir that tourists like to come here. The shrines like Dargah Hazratbal, the Shrine of Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jeelani (RA) at Khanyar, Sarai Bala, the Shrine of Sheikh Noor ud Din Wali (RA) at Charari Shareef, the Shrine of Sheikh Syed Ali Hamdani in the downtown area of Srinagar (Srinagar is the summer capital of Kashmir), the shrine of Sultan Ul Arifeen in the downtown area, etc. Shakara Chariya Temple in

Srinagar is a famous and historical place for tourists that can be visited throughout the year in the valley.

Seasons in the Kashmir Valley

There are four seasons in Kashmir Valley: spring from 21st March to 21st June, summer from 21st June to 21st September, autumn from 21st September to 21st December, and winter from 21st December to 21st March. All the seasons are equally important and have immense importance for the tourism sector. Kashmir is unique in all respects throughout the world, as the weather is so pleasant and alluring, the rivers are so calm and bestowd, the waterfalls are so big and attractive, the mountains are so giant and whitish, the forests are so luscious and standing in upright positions, and the meadows are so pure and like carpets. Every district of the Kashmir Valley is bestowed by the Almighty, and every district witnesses a huge flow of tourists. The culture of the Kashmir Valley is so unique and beautiful that everyone likes and loves it, like recipes, carpets, paper mache, clothes, etc. I want to invite all my friends from all corners of the world to come to Kashmir and feel the difference. Kashmiri are so famous for their hospitality and are very loving and caring people.

# An Open Letter to CEO Hajj Committee Of India

## Hajj Issues – Exclusion of Female SHIs & Trainers for Kashmiri Women Hajis



Respected Sir

Hajj issues faced by Kashmiri women continue to be ignored year after year, and this time is no different. It is extremely disappointing that not a single female State Hajj Inspector (khadim) has been selected from Jammu & Kashmir, nor has any female trainer been appointed to guide Kashmiri women Hajis. This is a clear case of injustice and gender discrimination. Don't Kashmiri women deserve to learn the basics of Hajj from a female trainer with whom they feel comfortable? Don't female Hajis deserve the presence of female SHIs to assist them during Hajj in situations specific to women? Why is there no set criterion to appoint at least one female SHI for every 150 female Hajis?

How is a male SHI expected to be the right choice for women Hajis, particularly Kashmiri women, when there are so many Taboos associated with many topics related to women? Kashmiri women, many of whom are elderly and uneducated, struggle with communica-

tion, making their Hajj journey even more difficult without female SHIs who can speak their native language.

During my own Hajj experience last year, I saw firsthand the hardships faced by Kashmiri women due to the absence of a female SHI. The visit to Riyaz-ul-Jannah without female SHI was particularly challenging, and the lack of a female SHI at Mina and Arafat, where women have separate tents, led to unnecessary chaos and confusion. This situation is bound to repeat itself this year if no corrective measures are taken. Now, with no female SHI included again this year, history is bound to repeat itself, causing immense distress to Kashmiri women.

Why should Kashmiri female Hajis suffer due to this negligence? A fair and simple solution is to include female SHIs from Kashmir who can effectively assist these women. Hajj is once in a lifetime opportunity and an important pillar of islam fir Kashmiri women too, she deserves to perform hajj with every sort of right knowledge and guidance where female trainer and female SHI is must. I urge you to immediately address this pressing issue and ensure that Kashmiri women Hajis receive the support they rightfully deserve.

I look forward to your positive response.

Writer of this letter is Saima Shafi.Can be reached at : Shafisaima2988@gmail.com





# SMC's Marriage Hall Fee Hike Triggers Public Outrage In Srinagar "Govt Must Reduce Burden, Not Increase It": Sadiq Baqal Slams Fee Hike

## HT News Network

Srinagar, 21 Mar, 2025: As the wedding season approaches in Kashmir, the Srinagar Municipal Corporation's (SMC) recent decision to hike marriage and community hall booking charges from 10,000 to 25,000 per day has triggered widespread outrage. The sudden and steep increase has placed an unbearable financial burden on lower and middle-class families already struggling due to economic distress, rising unemployment, and inflation.

Over the past few years, Kashmir's economy has suffered multiple setbacks due to political uncertainty, the COVID-19 pandemic and low business activity. Business owners, daily wage workers, shopkeepers, transporters, artisans, weavers, auto

drivers, construction laborers, farmers and small-scale traders are finding it increasingly difficult to make ends meet. Many small businesses, particularly in retail, handicrafts and hospitality sector, are facing declining sales and are unable to repay bank loans, leading to a surge in Non-Performing Assets (NPAs).

The economic downturn has already forced many businesses to shut down or downsize, leading to mass layoffs. With limited income sources, families are struggling to afford even basic necessities, let alone the heavy costs of wedding arrangements.

A typical Kashmiri wedding function lasts two to three days, with an additional day required for pre-event arrangements such as: Shafaa (traditional space for preparing Wazwan, the grand Kashmiri feast),



Venue decoration and seating arrangements. Setup for lighting, sound systems and wedding essentials. With the new 25,000 per day fee, families now face a venue expense of 75,000 or more—an unaffordable sum for most people

in the Valley.

Veteran Trade Leader Mohammad Sadiq Baqal stated "The business community is already on the verge of collapse. Many traders, shopkeepers and vendors are struggling to even pay rent. With rising unemploy-

ment and no financial support, increasing marriage hall charges will only push more people into financial distress. This decision is not only unfair but also lacks empathy for the ongoing economic crisis."

He added "We are witnessing thousands of small businesses turning into bank defaulters due to reduced sales and zero profit margins. Even prominent businesses are struggling to stay afloat. Instead of easing financial burdens, the government is making weddings a privilege of the wealthy. If this continues, we may see a rise in unsafe, illegal wedding venues, creating bigger civic problems."

Ghulam Mohammad, a distressed commoner, voiced his frustration "How can a poor man afford 25,000 per day? Weddings are a once-in-a-lifetime event and now even that is

becoming a luxury. The government should consider our plight instead of burdening us further. If this decision isn't reversed, many families will be forced to either cancel or shift their weddings to inadequate spaces."

Manzoor Ahmad, a small business owner, warned "Many businesses have already turned into bank defaulters because of low sales and zero profit margins. People are losing jobs and now this additional financial burden will only worsen the situation. The administration must reconsider this move. Weddings should not become an unaffordable privilege—it is a basic social necessity in our culture."

Srinagar residents already face severe space constraints, with many families living in cramped homes on less than a marla of land.

## Empowering Krishi Sakhi: KVK Kupwara Launches 5-Day Training on Natural Farming

### DR.AB QAYOOM

Kupwara, Mar, 21: To promote sustainable agricultural practices and empower rural women in farming, the Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK) Kupwara (SKUAST-K) has launched a 5-day training program on Natural Farming. The initiative, aimed at fostering eco-friendly agricultural methods, saw an enthusiastic participation of 35 Krishi Sakhis on the first day. The training program commenced with a series of informative lectures delivered by KVK scientists and an officer from the Agriculture Department. These sessions covered various aspects of Natural Farming, emphasizing its benefits in enhancing soil fertility, reducing chemical dependency, and ensuring long-term sustainability. A brief discussion was also held between the Krishi Sakhis and the scientists, allowing for an exchange of ideas and experiences. The interactive session provided valuable insights into the



practical challenges faced by farmers and the potential of natural farming in addressing them. On this occasion, Head of KVK Kupwara, Prof. Kaiser Mohi-ud-Din, elaborated on the significance of Natural Farming and the crucial role of Krishi Sakhis in promoting these practices at the grassroots level. He highlighted how women

farmers can act as agents of change, driving the movement toward sustainable agriculture. Prof. Kaiser also shed light on pressing global issues such as climate change and water scarcity, stressing the urgent need to adopt environment-friendly farming methods. Additionally, he provided an insightful overview of the historical

relevance of Natural Farming, drawing connections to ancient agricultural traditions that prioritized harmony with nature. The training program at KVK Kupwara aligns with the broader vision of sustainable agriculture, equipping Krishi Sakhis with the knowledge and skills to implement Natural Farming techniques in their communities. By reducing chemical usage, improving soil health, and conserving water resources, such initiatives play a pivotal role in ensuring food security and environmental conservation. As the training progresses, more hands-on demonstrations and interactive sessions are expected to further enhance the understanding and practical application of Natural Farming principles. This initiative by KVK Kupwara underscores its commitment to empowering farmers, especially women, and fostering agricultural practices that ensure a sustainable and prosperous future.

## Omar Govt focused to development rural and far-flung areas: Rattan Lal Gupta

### HT News Network



SRINAGAR, Mar 21: The Omar Abdullah-led government is resolute in its commitment to focus the equitable development of far-flung areas, particularly in the Chenab Valley and Pir Panjal region. The previous regime has miserably failed to address the developmental needs of these neglected areas for continuously 10 years, leaving them deprived of basic infrastructure and essential services. This was stated by Adv. Rattan Lal Gupta, Provincial President of JKNC, while interacting with a deputation at Sher-e-Kashmir Bhawan, Jammu from Padder headed by its Block President Janki Nath who presented a Book named "PADDER THE DEV DHARTI" Written by Dhoulat Ram of Padder to the Provincial President highlighting the deplorable condition of the region. He said people's problems have increased manifold in absence of basic amenities due to anti-people policies adopted by the earlier government. He lamented that despite its immense tourism potential, Padder has remained neglected due to the lack of interest from successive regimes. He urged the administration to take immediate measures to boost infrastructure and promote tourism in the area. He further highlighted the acute shortage of healthcare facilities as no doctor available in PHC stating that people are forced to travel long distances for medical treatment at Kishtwar. The absence of essential administrative officers such as Tehsildars in Gulabgarh and Machail has only exacerbated the hardships of local residents. Rattan Lal Gupta, while addressing the concerns, strongly criticized the previous administration for failing to uplift far-flung areas. He stated that the neglect of regions like Chenab Valley and Pir Panjal region reflected.

## اطلاع عام

ہر خاص و عام کو اطلاع دی جاتی ہے بنک اکونٹ زیر نمبر  
Mohammad Jabbar نام B 4 5 1 4  
Sheikh اندراج ہوا ہے جبکہ میرا اصل نام مطابق ادھار  
کاڈ Mohd Jabar Sheikh ہے اب اسکی دستگی کرانی  
مطلوب ہے کسی کو کوئی عذر ہو تو وہ سات یوم کے اندر اندر  
دفتر ہس میں پیش کرے بعد از معاد کوئی عذر قبول نہیں ہو  
گا

المستہر

Mohd Jabar sheikh  
Ama Sheikh  
Frishana Pahlagam

## اطلاع عام

ہر خاص و عام کو اطلاع دی جاتی ہے کہ سچے اپنی والدہ رتقی بیگم زوجہ عبدال  
سلام بیگم سائیکل پھلگام کی ڈیٹ سرٹفکٹ ہلاک پھلگام سے نکالی  
اس بارے میں سچی کو کوئی 29/10/2023 مطلوب ہے مطابق تاریخ  
عذر ہو تو وہ سات یوم کے اندر اندر ہلاک ڈولٹ اف پھلگام میں پیش  
کرے بعد از معاد کوئی عذر قبول نہیں ہوگا

المستہر

شکیلہ بانو دختر رتقی بیگم ساکن فصل پھلگام

## اطلاع عام

ہر خاص و عام کو اطلاع دی جاتی ہے کہ ادھار کاڈ تاریخ  
پیدائش سرٹفکٹ اور ڈومسیل سرٹفکٹ میں میرے بیٹے کا  
نام D.O.B اور Iffam Farooq Sheikh اور B.D.O. 11/08/2004  
Iffam Farooq اور D.O.B 01/03/2007 ہے اب  
ان سب کی دستگی کرانی مطلوب ہے کسی کو کوئی عذر ہو تو  
وہ سات یوم کے اندر اندر دفتر ہس میں پیش کرے بعد از معاد  
کوئی عذر قبول نہیں ہوگا

المستہر

Farooq Ahmad Sheikh  
F/O Iffam Farooq  
R/O Pahlagam Kashmir

## Police books 2 notorious drug peddlers under PIT NDPS Act in Anantnag, Kulgam

### Farooq Rather

Kulgam March 21: In a continued crackdown on drug trafficking and efforts to eliminate the drug menace from society, Police have booked two notorious drug peddlers under the Prevention of Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (PIT NDPS) Act in Anantnag and Kulgam after obtaining formal detention orders from the competent authorities.

In Anantnag, the accused Ishfaq Ahmad Mir son of Showkat Ahmad Mir resident of Sirhama Srigufwara was found actively involved in drug peddling, posing a significant threat to public health and safety. After a thorough investigation and collection of substantial evidence, necessary approvals were obtained from the competent authority for his detention under the PIT NDPS Act. Following due legal procedures, the accused has been lodged at Central Jail Kot Bhalwal, Jammu, preventing him from continuing his illegal activities.

## PUBLIC NOTICE

I am applying for Retail Fertilizer License before Chief Agriculture Officer Pulwama under the name and style M/S Phytocare Agri Services, Near Govt. HSS Pinglena District Pulwama. If any body has any objection he/she may submit the same to the Chief Agriculture Officer Pulwama within 7 days from the date of issue of this notice after that no objection will be entertained

Name. Sakeena Akhter  
C/O: Nazir Ahmad  
R/O Pinglena Tehsil: Pulwama  
District: Pulwama

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

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

### PUBLIC NOTICE

The Registrar Births and Deaths (Block Development Officer Wagoora)/ chokedar has submitted case file pertaining to Birth of MOHAMMAD ANNAS MIR, RABIYA JAVID & ANEES UL ISLAM MIR S/O JAVID AHMAD MIR R/O SALOOSA Tehsil KREERI Distt. Baramulla having verified the date of Birth as 09/12/2017, 17/04/2016 & 04/10/2014 and event has been shown to be occurred at HOME for issuance of delay order .In this connection . if anyone have any objection to the issuance of delay order of Birth certificate shall present his/her claim this office within 07 days, after that no objection shall be entertained

Executive Magistrate  
1st Class KREERI

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

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

### PUBLIC NOTICE

The Registrar Births and Deaths (Block Development Officer Wagoora)/ chokedar has submitted case file pertaining to Birth of MOHAMMAD MAQBOOL RATHER, S/O GHULAM MOHAMMAD RATHER R/O KHISIPORA Tehsil KREERI Distt. Baramulla having verified the date of Birth as 25/09/2010 & 14/12/2014 and event has been shown to be occurred at HOME for issuance of delay order .In this connection . if anyone have any objection to the issuance of delay order of Birth certificate shall present his/her claim this office within 07 days, after that no objection shall be entertained

Executive Magistrate  
1st Class KREERI

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

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

### PUBLIC NOTICE

The Registrar Births and Deaths (Block Development Officer Wagoora)/ chokedar has submitted case file pertaining to Birth of MOHAMMAD MAQBOOL RATHER, S/O GHULAM MOHAMMAD RATHER R/O KHISIPORA Tehsil KREERI Distt. Baramulla having verified the date of Birth as 05/04/2008 and event has been shown to be occurred at HOME for issuance of delay order .In this connection . if anyone have any objection to the issuance of delay order of Birth certificate shall present his/her claim this office within 07 days, after that no objection shall be entertained

Executive Magistrate  
1st Class KREERI

## Awanta Bhawan residents decry faulty drainage system in area

### HT News Network

SRINAGAR, Mar 21: The residents of Doctors lane at Awanta Bhawan near Bhagat Shoor have complained of faulty drainage system in the area and urged the authorities to take immediate measures so as to solve this glaring civic issue.

A group of the colony residents while talking to Headlines Today said that the blockage in the drainage system leads to problems as and when there are rains. They said the drains overflow and the dirty water makes the movement of people virtually impossible. They said that despite the issue being raised at multiple levels no action whatsoever has been taken so far.

"We raised this issue with our legislator Salman Ali Sagar with the hope that necessary corrective measures would be taken but nothing of that sort happened. The issue was also brought into the notice of concerned officers and officials of the city drainage division but here too no action was taken," said the residents.

The residents also said that the drainage system has not been taken to the logical conclusion and it was left midway by the concerned department. They appealed to the concerned minister to take note of their problems and solve the same without any further delay.

## BJP Stands Firm with Daily Wagers, Demands Immediate Regularization: Dr. Abhijeet Jasrotia

### HT News Network

SRINAGAR, Mar 21: BJP spokespersons voiced concern over the conduct of the house-members who are trying to disturb the proceedings of the house and causing loss of time and public exchequer.

Party takes serious note of baseless allegations, hurling aspersions and stimulating insinuations against the constitutional authority of LG on the floor of the House. The issue was raised by the party spokespersons GL Raina and Dr. Abhijeet Jasrotia accompanied by Dr. Pardeep Mahotra, BJP Media Incharge in a press Conference at party headquarters.

"It needs to be underlined that there are certain established parliamentary customs, conventions, etiquette and rules which are required to be observed by members, both inside the House as well as outside, former MLC GL Raina recalled. These are based not only on Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in the Parliament/ State Legislatures and Rulings and Observations by the Chair but also on past practices, customs and conventions and precedents and traditions of Parliament/ state Legislatures, which a member is expected to know and be aware of, he added. Stressing the fact that parliamentary privileges are not absolute and are subject to certain limits, GL Raina stated that MLAs are expected to use their privileges responsibly and not abuse them for personal gain or political mileage. We are also aware that it is within the powers of the House to determine each case. Apart from the Committee of Privileges of the House which may inquire into cases of breach of privilege of the House by its members. Dr. Abhijeet Jasrotia stated that it is responsibility of the presiding authority of the House to ensure that members don't cross limits and in case someone dares to do that action under rules be taken against the concerned member.

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

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

### PUBLIC NOTICE

The Registrar Births and Deaths (Block Development Officer Wagoora)/ chokedar has submitted case file pertaining to Birth of TANVEER, AHMAD KHANDAY, S/O BASHIR AHMAD KHANDAY R/O KHISIPORA Tehsil KREERI Distt. Baramulla having verified the date of Birth as 15/04/2004 and event has been shown to be occurred at HOME for issuance of delay order .In this connection . if anyone have any objection to the issuance of delay order of Birth certificate shall present his/her claim this office within 07 days, after that no objection shall be entertained

Executive Magistrate  
1st Class KREERI







# Sakeena Itoo visits fire-affected families in Kadipora, Anantnag Takes stock of relief measures, assures full support from Govt.

■ **Farooq Rather**

ANANTNAG, MARCH 21: Minister for Health and Medical Education, Social Welfare and Education, Sakeena Itoo today visited Kadipora, Anantnag, to express solidarity with the families affected by devastating fire incident yesterday.

MLAs Peerzada Mohd Sayeed, Abdul Majeed Larmi and Altaf Ahmad Wani, DC Anantnag Syed Fakhruddin Hamid and other senior officers of district administration also accompanied the Minister.

During the visit, Sakeena personally interacted with the victims, assessed their grievances and took

stock of the ongoing relief measures.

While interacting with the affected families on the occasion, the Minister assured them all possible assistance from the government. "On the directions of Chief Minister, Omar Abdullah, my team of MLAs are here to stand in solidarity with you. Our government will provide you all possible support and assistance to overcome this tragic loss", Sakeena stated.

She added that the Chief Minister is personally monitoring the relief measures and was in constant contact with the district administration from last night to gather on ground details of this devastating fire incident. "The tragic loss suffered by fire affected



families is heart-wrenching and cannot be compensated in words. But our government is shoulder to shoulder

with you in this hour of distress and will ensure that all necessary aid and support reaches you without

delay", she said.

The Minister also urged the Deputy Commissioner to expedite the rehabilitation process. She emphasized on the need for immediate relief, including temporary shelter, food supplies and financial aid to help the victims rebuild their lives.

She also called upon the district administration to conduct a thorough assessment of damages and provide swift compensation to the affected households.

While addressing the concerns of local residents and fire victims regarding need for preventive measures to avert such incidents in future, Sakeena Itoo assured them that the

government will look out the possibility for decongesting this locality besides fire safety infrastructure in the locality will also be enhanced.

Later, the Minister also chaired a meeting with the senior officers of district administration and took detailed assessment of relief as well as immediate rehabilitation measures.

During the meeting, the Minister impressed upon the Deputy Commissioner to ensure temporary shelter facilities for these fire affected families. She asked the district administration to arrange suitable bedding and other essential things for these victims.

## GDC Baramulla Hosts District Round of Viksit Bharat Youth Parliament

■ **HT News Network**

Baramulla: The Government Degree College Baramulla organized the district round of the Viksit Bharat Youth Parliament on 20th March. Baramulla served as the nodal district, with associated districts including Baramulla, Kupwara, and Bandipora. The topic for the event was "One Nation, One Election: Paving the Way for Viksit Bharat."

The aim of the event was to provide a platform for talented students to showcase their interest in intellectual discussions and share their thoughts on Viksit Bharat. The selected candidates will represent the nodal district of Baramulla at the State Level Viksit Bharat Youth



Parliament. The event was coordinated by Prof. Ishfaq-ul-Rehman, Assistant Professor of Public Administration at Government Degree College Baramulla. The participating students were evaluated by a distinguished jury comprising Dr. Ibrahim Khaja, Assistant Professor of Political Science, J&K HED; Miss Aabida War, a prominent social activist from J&K; Mr. Arshid Ahmed Khan, Assistant Commis-

sioner Revenue, Baramulla; Prof. Reyaz Ahmad Wani, Assistant Professor of Political Science, J&K HED; and Dr. Nazir Ahmad Mir, Assistant Professor of Public Administration, J&K HED. Following a thorough evaluation, the jury will select the top 10 candidates who will represent the nodal district of Baramulla at the State Level Viksit Bharat Youth Parliament. The Principal of Govern-

ment Degree College Baramulla, Mohd. Shafi Lone, inaugurated the event and encouraged the participating candidates in the Viksit Bharat Youth Parliament as the Chairman of the event. "The aim behind this event is to take suggestions from the youth of the country, as they have a better vision for the nation," he said.

Prof. Tariq Chalkoo, the Staff Secretary of Government Degree College Baramulla and Vice Chairman of the event, highlighted the significance of the event as a training ground for the youth of the country. "As the future of India, it is the responsibility of all youth to engage in the democratic process and discussions and work towards a more inclusive and progressive nation."

## International Day of Forests Celebrated with Green Fervour in Kupwara

■ **HT News Network**

Kupwara, March 21: The International Day of Forests (World Arbor Day) was celebrated worldwide with enthusiasm, highlighting the theme "Forests and Food," which underscores the critical role of forests in food systems and livelihoods. The Jammu & Kashmir Department of Social Forestry actively participated in these celebrations across the Union Territory, reinforcing its commitment to environmental conservation.

In line with the directives of Commissioner Secretary, Forest, Environment & Ecology, Mrs. Sheetal Nanda, Principal Chief Conservator of Forests, Sh. Suresh Kumar Gupta, Director Social Forestry, Dr. Sunesh Buxy, Regional Director Social Forestry,



Mr. Zahid Aslam Mughal, and DFO Social Forestry Division Kupwara, Mr. Zahoor Ahmad Akhoun, the Social Forestry Division Kupwara organized multiple awareness programs, webinars, seminars, and plantation drives across the district.

A notable plantation-cum-awareness program was conducted at Govt. Higher Secondary School Kandi and Govt. Higher Secondary School Nagri,

where Chief Education Officer (CEO) Kupwara, Mr. Mehraj-ud-Din Shah, graced the occasion as the special guest. Officials from the Social Forestry Department, including Range Officers, Block Officers, SFWs, and frontline workers, actively participated, demonstrating their commitment to environmental sustainability.

National Secretary of the Trade Union Coordination Centre and Block Forest

Officer Kupwara, Mr. Syed Ghulam Rasool Geelani, addressed the gathering, emphasizing the urgent need for sustainable development, afforestation, and conservation efforts. He highlighted the severe threats posed by climate change and global warming, urging collective action to protect the region's "green gold." CEO Kupwara, Mr. Mehraj-ud-Din Shah, also stressed the importance of transforming afforestation into a people's movement. He lauded the Social Forestry Department's relentless efforts in combating climate change and promoting a greener, healthier future.

The event concluded with a strong resolve to continue afforestation and conservation initiatives, ensuring a sustainable environment for future generations.

## Senior BJP Leader Mohd Lateef Bhat Reviews Development Projects in Patal Bagh, Pampore

■ **HT News Network**



Pulwama, March 21: Senior BJP leader Mohd Lateef Bhat visited Patal Bagh in the Pampore constituency to assess the progress of key developmental projects. He was accompanied by DDC member Pampore, Advocate Meena Lateef, as they reviewed the ongoing work on solar lights and an irrigation pump in the area.

During the visit, the leaders interacted with local residents and public delegations, addressing their concerns and ensuring that essential infrastructure projects are completed on time. Bhat emphasized the need for timely execution of development works to improve the quality of life for residents.

The review focused on the installation of solar lights, aimed at enhancing public safety and energy efficiency, as well as the irrigation pump, which is expected to boost the agricultural sector in the region. Bhat and Advocate Meena Lateef assured the public that their concerns would be taken into account and that the government remains committed to the development of Pampore. Ir presence and added immense value to the event.

## Seven Health Officials Penalized Over Dog Incident at SDH Chadoora

■ **HT News Network**

Srinagar, Mar 21: Authorities have taken strict action against seven healthcare employees, including two doctors, after a viral video showed a dog inside the Emergency Trauma Room of Sub-District Hospital (SDH) Chadoora in Budgam. A disciplinary inquiry found gross negligence, leading to immediate penalties.

Three Multi-Tasking Staff (MTS) members—Ansar Sheikh, Mushtaq Ahmad Rather, and Abdul Gani Waza—were suspended and attached to the Directorate of Health Services Kashmir (DHSK). Two doctors, Dr. Mubashir Amin and Dr. Aqeel Afzal, were also held accountable and attached to DHSK. Additionally, pharmacist Zahoor Ahmad and sanitary inspector Mushtaq Ahmad faced disciplinary action. The inquiry revealed serious administrative lapses, including poor hygiene, lack of CCTV monitoring, and failure to maintain an attendance register.

## Street Play's Raise Awareness on 'Beti Bachao Beti Padhao'

■ **HT News Network**

Srinagar/March 21 In a significant initiative to promote gender equality and advocate for girls' education, the Department of Social Welfare Mission Shakti Srinagar, has launched a series of street plays and Nukad Natak under the 'Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao' campaign. The initiative, which commenced on March 6, 2025, will continue until March 26, 2025, across various locations in the district viz-a-viz Dara, Fakir Gujri, Rambirgarh, Lasjan, Balhama, and various educational institutions GGHSS Nishat, GGHSS Kothibagh, GGHSS Rajbagh. The objective of the campaign is to raise awareness about the importance of empowering girls through education, addressing gender discrimination, and preventing



early child marriage.

These nukad natak emphasize the critical role of families and society in ensuring girls receive proper education and are protected from early child marriage, which hinders their development and well-being. It also highlights importance of girls receiving proper respect and value at par with son's at every stage at family and societal level

The street plays / nukad natak convey powerful mes-

sages to parents on the necessity of providing equal opportunities to girls, highlighting that an educated and empowered girl contributes to a progressive and prosperous society. Additionally, also addresses the detrimental effects of early child marriage, stressing the need for collective action to eliminate this harmful practice. The performances have been attracting large audiences and receiving widespread appreciation.

## Mirwaiz Seeks Revocation of AAC Ban, Calls Decision Unjustified

■ **HT News Network**

Srinagar, Mar 21, KNT: In his first public address since the ban on the Jammu and Kashmir Awami Action Committee (AAC), Mirwaiz Umar Farooq termed the move as "harsh and uncalled for," demanding its immediate revocation. Speaking at Srinagar's historic Jama Masjid during Friday prayers, he asserted that the AAC has always stood for peace, dialogue, and social reform.

Expressing dismay over the government's decision to declare AAC an "illegal association," Mirwaiz Umar Farooq said the allegations were not only "strange but also ironic." He emphasized that despite adversities, the AAC has upheld nonviolence and patience. "Those who have consistently advocated peace are now accused of disturbing law and order. These allegations contradict the AAC's history," he remarked.

Tracing the organisation's roots, the Mirwaiz spoke about the contributions of his father, Shaheed-e-Millat Mirwaiz Mohammad Farooq, who founded the AAC in 1964 after the Moi-e-Muqaddas agitation. He recalled how his father dedicated his life to religious, social, and educational reforms, particularly advocating for women's rights and empowerment.

Referring to his father's efforts for reconciliation, Mirwaiz Umar Farooq recounted how in 1983, as AAC president, his father worked to unite political rivals and opposed violence in Kashmir. He also reminded the audience of his father's appeals to New Delhi to engage with armed youth and his bold condemnation of human rights violations. "How can an organisation founded on such principles be seen as a threat?" he questioned.

## Social Forestry Department Organizes Grand Plantation Drive To Celebrate International Day of Forests At JNV School Budgam

■ **HT News Network**

Budgam, 21 Mar, 2025: The Social Forestry Department, Range Budgam, celebrated the International Day of Forests with great enthusiasm by organizing a grand plantation drive at Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya (JNV) School Budgam. The event was conducted under the directions of Dr. Mumtaz Majeed, Divisional Forest Officer (DFO) Srinagar and supervised by Bilal Ahmed Matoo, Range Forest Officer, Social Forestry Range Budgam. The plantation drive witnessed the participation of several dignitaries, including Private Schools Association J&K (PSAJK) President G.N. Var was as the chief guest and D.K. Singh, Principal of JNV Budgam, as the guest of honor. Other notable attendees included Jammu & Kashmir Trade Union Council President Abdul



Majeed Parray, Block Officer of the Social Forestry Department Mohd Lateef Shagoo, Zahoor Ahmad and several other prominent personalities. Students also actively participated in the event. A total of 500 saplings were planted within the school premises to promote ecological balance and raise awareness

about the importance of forests.

Speaking at the event, PSAJK President G.N. Var, emphasized the need to involve students in environmental initiatives. He stated, "A significant portion of our population consists of students in schools and colleges they are the future of our planet. If children develop awareness

about the environment and understand the importance of trees, we secure our future. The celebration of the International Day of Forests serves as a reminder that forests exist in various forms, each playing a crucial role in maintaining ecological balance. If we fail to protect our environment and recognize the significance of trees, we ultimately put human lives at risk. It is commendable that today's program has engaged students, as environmental education should be an integral part of project-based learning."

He further stressed that human survival depends entirely on a healthy environment, making its protection and preservation imperative. Programs like these play a vital role in educating both children and the public about the importance of planting trees and conserving nature.







## Nasha Mukht Jammu Kashmir Abhiyan Resource Persons imparted training in Nowshera, Sunderbani

### HT News Network

RAJOURI, MARCH 21: In a significant step towards promotion of Nasha Mukht Jammu Kashmir Abhiyan, training programmes were organised today for Resource Persons here at Nowshera and Sunderbani.

At Nowshera, Additional Deputy Commissioner Babu Ram Tandon emphasized the need for quality training and urged resource persons to actively contribute in raising awareness about the ill effects of drug abuse. He interacted with the participants and responded to their queries during a dedicated question-answer session.



A similar training program was held in Sunderbani, where employees from government departments took part. Additional Deputy Commissioner Rajeev Magotra was also present on the occasion.

Head of the Department of Psychiatry, Dr. Parvez Alam was the key speaker. He provided valuable insights into the psychological and social impact of drug abuse. He also discussed preventive mea-

sures and strategies for rehabilitation of those struggling with drug addiction. Similar training programs shall be organized in every nook and corner of the district. The initiative aims to ensure widespread awareness and community participation in making Rajouri a drug-free district. A similar training program was held in Sunderbani, where employees from government departments took part. Additional Deputy Commissioner Rajeev Magotra was also present on the occasion. Head of the Department of Psychiatry, Dr. Parvez Alam was the key speaker. He provided valuable insights into the psychological.

## KVK Reasi hosts 5 Day training programme on Natural Farming

### HT News Network

REASI, MARCH 21: Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK) Reasi, under the aegis of Sher-e-Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences and Technologies Jammu (SKUAST-J), organised a five day training programme on natural farming here today at its campus.

A number of Krishi Sakhis of the district participated in the programme organized under the dynamic stewardship of Vice Chancellor Prof. B.N. Tripathi and able guidance of Director Extension, Prof. Amrith Vaid of SKUAST-J.

The objective of the programme was to train and educate the Krishi Sakhis about various practices of



natural farming.

Chief Agriculture Officer Harbans Singh inaugurated the programme. He said that natural farming is the need of the hour as it maintains soil health, human health and biodiversity.

Earlier, Chief Scientist and Head of KVK Dr. Banarsi Lal welcomed participants and briefed the advantages and prospects of natural farming. He

explained the concept of natural farming and guided participants on the preparation and uses of Jeevamrit, Beejamrit, Neemastra, Agniasta, Brahmata etc. He highlighted the seed treatment using Beejamrit. He added that natural farming is based on the principles of biodiversity, soil regeneration and water conservation. District Agriculture

Officer Naresh Kumar Sharma explained the four pillars of natural farming and demonstrated the preparation of Jeevamrit and Beejamrit. He explained the practices of mulching, Acchadana (moisture) and various other biocontrol agents required for natural farming. Agriculture Extension Officer Thuroo Pankaj Kumar Sharma said that natural farming is agro-ecology based farming which integrates crops, trees, livestock and functional biodiversity. Agriculture Extension Officer, Bhabber Sunil Kumar discussed the importance of farm fields as a source of organic matter and the usage of indigenous seed and bioinoculants as the catalyst required.

## International Day of Forests celebrated at Doda with Plantation Drive

### HT News Network

DODA, MARCH 21: A plantation drive was today conducted here at the Forest Complex to mark the International Day of Forests 2025.

The event was held under the supervision of Conservator of Forests, Chenab Circle Sandeep Kumar. The event focused on this year's theme, "Forests and Food," highlighting the vital role forests play in sustaining life and providing resources.

The event saw the active participation of DFO Mahesh Thakur, Range Officer Siraj, Range Officer Soil, Ashok Kumar, and other officials from the Forest Department. The Conservator of Forests emphasized the need to preserve the rich forest cover of Chenab Valley and raise awareness about sustainable forest management. He also underscored the importance of increasing green cover by encouraging tree plantation. Stressing the role of forests in food security and ecological balance, he called for community involvement in conservation efforts. Participants planted



various tree species suited to the region's climate and soil. The initiative aimed to inspire collective responsibility for environmental preservation and promote the significance of forests in supporting livelihoods and biodiversity.

The Forest Department also announced plans to conduct similar awareness drives in schools and rural communities, ensuring that the message of forest conservation reaches the grassroots level.

## District Task Force Ramban Launches Anti-Child Labour Enforcement Drive

### HT News Network

Ramban, March 21: The District Task Force Ramban, under the directives of Deputy Commissioner Baseer-UI-Haq Chaudhary, conducted a comprehensive enforcement operation to rescue children subjected to child labour and forced begging in Ramban Town and surrounding areas. The drive was supervised by the District Child Protection Officer (DCPO) and Assistant Labour Commissioner (ALC) Ramban.

Led by Assistant Labour Commissioner Amit Kumar and CWC Chairperson Nighat Ghani, the task force comprised officials from the District Child Protection Unit, Health Department, Employment Department, District Police, and Child Helpline. The team carried



out surprise inspections at commercial establishments, identifying and rescuing minors engaged in exploitative labour.

Legal action will be taken against business owners employing

minors, including revocation of licenses and criminal proceedings. Strict penalties will also be imposed on individuals involved in child trafficking and forced begging. The public has been urged to report

any such cases to the Child Helpline (1098) or District Child Protection Unit.

During the operation, 14 children were rescued and presented before the Child Welfare Committee at Community Hall Ramban. Their guardians were counseled and warned against violating child protection laws. The children were reunited with their families under strict monitoring, ensuring their well-being and future protection.

The ALC also educated stakeholders on child labour laws and workplace safety measures, reinforcing the administration's commitment to eradicating child exploitation in the district. Legal action will be taken against business owners employing minors, including revocation of licenses and criminal proceedings. Strict penalties will also be imposed.

## Hindustan Shiv Sena Warns AAP MLA Mehraj Malik Desist From Efforts To Damage The Mutual Brotherhood In Jammu : Vikrant Kapoor

### HT News Network

Jammu, 21 March : Hindustan Shiv Sena State President Vikrant Kapoor has given a stern warning to Aam Aadmi Party MLA Mehraj Malik from Doda that he should desist from efforts to hurt mutual brotherhood in Jammu. Along with this, he also warned that he should publicly apologize for hurting the religious sentiments of a particular community, otherwise Hindustan Shiv Sena will take strict action against him.

Addressing a press conference in Jammu, Vikrant Kapoor State president of Hindustan Shiv Sena said this. He said that this statement by Maharaj Malik is that



alcohol is consumed by Hindus indeed condemnable. He said that during the holy festivals, it is there is no place for such state-

ments in civilized society and AAP MLA's statement is very irresponsible and condemnable.

Vikrant Kapoor said that this clearly shows that you are trying to hurt mutual brotherhood in Jammu. He said that no conspiracy to spoil the atmosphere by hurting mutual brotherhood in Jammu will not be allowed to succeed at any cost. He warned that if Mehraj Malik did not publicly apologize for this, they would surround him and take strict action against him. Senior leaders of Hindustan Shiv Sena Sunil Dabotra, Rakesh Bhardwaj, Baba Ram Kath, , Abhishek, Himanshu, Amit, Women Wing leader Jyoti Devi and others were also present during the press conference.

## Police Foil PHE Daily Wagers' Protest March in Jammu

### HT News Network

Jammu, Mar 21, : Police on Friday prevented a protest march by daily wage workers of the Public Health Engineering (PHE) department as they attempted to move toward Chief Minister Omar Abdullah's residence, demanding regularization and the release of pending wages.

Under the banner of the PHE Employees Union, hundreds of daily wagers, who have called for a 72-hour strike, raised slogans like "Omar Abdullah hosh mein aao", expressing anger over the government's inaction. As they tried to break through police barricades, security forces resorted to mild cane charges to disperse them. The protesters were stopped at Shaheed Chowk, preventing them from marching further.

Union leaders slammed the National Conference-led government for failing to

fulfill its commitments, accusing it of betraying workers despite making promises before elections. "For decades, governments have deceived us. This is yet another deception. The so-called committee is just a delaying tactic. We cannot feed our families on false assurances," a protest leader said.

Criticizing Omar Abdullah, the protesters accused him of neglecting poor workers while approving salary hikes for MLAs and increasing their constituency development funds to Rs 4 crore. Some even demanded that legislators transfer their salaries to the PHE wage account to compensate for unpaid dues. Jammu and Kashmir government recently formed a six-member committee to examine issues related to the regularization of daily wagers. Earlier this week, the chief minister announced that a roadmap would be prepared for presentation in the next budget session. [KNT]

## Central Integrated Pest Management Centre (CIPMC), Jammu conducts National Pest Surveillance System Training at Ramban

### HT News Network

RAMBAN, MARCH 21: The Central Integrated Pest Management Centre (CIPMC), Jammu, under the Union Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare, organized a one-day National Pest Surveillance System (NPSS) Training Programme in Ramban. The session was presided over by Chief Agriculture Officer Ram Gopal Sharma.

The CIPMC scientists, including Deputy Director Dr. Mithilesh Arya, Assistant Plant Protection Officer Dr. Haroon Rashid Hakla and Ravi Chhapre gave a PowerPoint presentation

demonstrating the NPSS App. Farmers were guided on downloading and using the app to identify harmful pests in their fields and access instant online assistance for effective pest control. This initiative aims to enhance crop productivity and improve farmers' income.

Speaking on the occasion, the CAO emphasized the importance of adopting modern pest surveillance techniques to minimize crop losses and enhance agricultural productivity. He highlighted the Agriculture Department's commitment to empowering farmers by integrating digital tools like the NPSS App, which helps in



early pest detection and effective management. He further stressed that such initiatives are crucial for promoting sustainable farming practices and ensuring better livelihoods for the farming community in Ramban. Prominent officials present at the event were District Nodal Officer NPSS, Ravi Sharma, Sub-Divisional Agriculture Officer Ramban, Kuldeep Kumar, Soil Conservation Officer, Vikram Jeey Singh and Agriculture Extension Officers from Ramban and Chanderkote.

The training program emphasized the importance of digital tools in modern agriculture, equipping farmers with

advanced pest management techniques to ensure sustainable and profitable farming in the region. Speaking on the occasion, the CAO emphasized the importance of adopting modern pest surveillance techniques to minimize crop losses and enhance agricultural productivity. He highlighted the Agriculture Department's commitment to empowering farmers by integrating digital tools like the NPSS App, which helps in early pest detection and effective management. He further stressed that such initiatives are crucial for promoting sustainable farming practices and ensuring better livelihoods.







## DC inspects civic amenities in Poonch Market

■ HT News Network

POONCH, MARCH 21: Deputy Commissioner Vikas Kundal today conducted an extensive tour of the Poonch market and its surroundings to evaluate the quality of municipal facilities, including lighting, public toilets and ongoing construction projects.

The Deputy Commissioner engaged with local shopkeepers and members of the Beopar Mandal, who expressed gratitude to the DC for conducting the on-ground assessment and giving them the opportunity to voice their concerns.

The Shopkeepers called for replacing old electric wires, construction of a toilet complex at Parade Park, modifying the ashes place of renowned novelist Krishan Chander, enhancing security with the installation of CCTV cameras behind the Poonch Fort, besides raising several other issues of public importance.

The Deputy Commissioner was accompanied by ADC Tahir Mustafa Malik, Tehsildar Haveli, Police officers, ARTO, Legal Metrology Officer, EO Municipality, Executive Engineers of JPDCL, Jal Shakti, PWD (R&B), Food Safety Commissioner



and other officers/officials.

The Deputy Commissioner also visited Krishan Chander Park and Poonch Fort to monitor the facilities available to the public. The effectiveness of the drainage system was scrutinized, along with the availability of essential services such as lighting, water supply, and overall clean-

liness in the market.

The Deputy Commissioner urged the executive engineer of PWD to expedite footpath construction to ensure public accessibility and directed installation of mirrors at Nakha Wali Chowk for improved traffic safety. The Deputy Commissioner assured the community that all legitimate

demands would be addressed promptly, including the installation of electric cable wires throughout the market. The Deputy Commissioner engaged with local shopkeepers and members of the Beopar Mandal, who expressed gratitude to the DC for conducting the on-ground assessment and giving them the opportunity to voice their concerns. The Shopkeepers called for replacing old electric wires, construction of a toilet complex at Parade Park, modifying the ashes place of renowned novelist Krishan Chander, enhancing security with the installation of CCTV cameras behind the Poonch Fort, besides raising several other issues of public importance. The Deputy Commissioner was accompanied by ADC Tahir Mustafa Malik, Tehsildar Haveli, Police officers, ARTO, Legal Metrology Officer, EO Municipality, Executive Engineers of JPDCL, Jal Shakti, PWD (R&B), Food Safety Commissioner and other officers/officials. The Deputy Commissioner also visited Krishan Chander Park and Poonch Fort to monitor the facilities available to the public. The effectiveness of the drainage system was scrutinized, along with the availability of essential services such as lighting, water supply.

## Tribal women sensitized on Menstrual Health, Hygiene at Kishtwar

■ HT News Network

KISHTWAR, MARCH 21: SANKALP: Hub for Empowerment of Women (HEW) today organised a Special Awareness Program for tribal women at AWC Gujjarbasti Padyerna, reinforcing the government's commitment to maternal health and child well-being.

The main focus of the awareness event was on Menstrual Health, Hygiene and childcare.

SANKALPHEW team members emphasized the importance of proper maternal care and personal hygiene, which are crucial for ensuring good health for both mother and child.

The team members highlighted the significance of hygiene and childcare in preventing diseases and improving overall well-being and also encouraged women to avail government schemes available for maternal and child health.

Besides the women were also made aware about various women centric schemes like SMAS, Ladli Beti, PMMVY, Pensions, Tejswani, PMEGP and also about Women Helpline (181).

Apart from this, SANKALP: HEW also distributed Baby Kits and Hygiene Kits among the participants which aimed to provide essential care items for newborns and promote hygiene awareness among women. The vote of thanks was presented by Dr. Ajay Abrol, who stressed the importance of skill development courses in preparing students for the ever-evolving job market.

## Girls' Sports Competition Week: GDC Doda organizes Archery competition

■ HT News Network

DODA, MARCH 21: The ongoing Girls' Sports Competition Week at Government Degree College (GDC) Doda witnessed an exciting Archery Competition, organized under the aegis of 'Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao' initiative. Held under the guidance of District Development Commissioner Harvinder Singh, the event aimed to promote sports among young women and encourage their participation in athletics. Students from across the district, along with sports enthusiasts, gathered to witness the thrilling competition.

The competition featured multiple categories, ensuring a fair platform for emerging archers to showcase their skills. Winners were honored with medals



and certificates in recognition of their dedication and excellence.

Addressing the participants, Tehsildar Dr. Shubh Ahmed Shah lauded their enthusiasm and highlighted the role of sports in shaping confident and disciplined individuals. He also emphasized the significance of the 'Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao' initiative in ensuring equal opportuni-

ties for girls in all fields, including sports.

Among others present were Bharat Bhushan, Chairman DCSA, Dr. Arjun Singh, and Dr. Jaswant Singh, Physical Directors of GDC Kastigarh and GDC Doda, respectively. The competition was conducted by officials from the Department of Youth Services and Sports (DYSS), including Vinod Bandral,

Anil Singh, Kamashevar Chandail, and Bandana Kotwal. With several more events lined up, the Girls' Sports Competition Week continues to inspire young women to break barriers and embrace a healthy, active lifestyle. Addressing the participants, Tehsildar Dr. Shubh Ahmed Shah lauded their enthusiasm and highlighted the role of sports in shaping confident.

## Free Sanitary Pad Distribution Drive Held in Srinagar Under "Eva Safety Door" Initiative

■ HT News Network

Srinagar, March 21, In a continued effort to uphold dignity, health, and empowerment for young girls, Irfana Zargar, widely known as the "Padwoman of Kashmir," organized a free sanitary pad distribution drive in Srinagar under her initiative, "Eva Safety Door." This noble endeavor focused on ensuring menstrual hygiene accessibility, breaking social taboos, and supporting young women in their educational and professional aspirations. The drive took place in Srinagar, reaching out to girl students in various schools and aspirants preparing for government jobs. Recognizing the holistic needs of the community. The event was graced by the presence of renowned social worker Syed Aijaz Kashani, sportsperson and social worker Miss Peer Mehak, and distinguished educationist Salim Mir. Their support added strength to the cause, as they



collectively emphasized the importance of menstrual health awareness, eradicating stigma, and ensuring access to essential hygiene products for all. Addressing the gathering, Irfana Zargar highlighted the financial and social barriers that many young girls face in managing their menstrual hygiene. She stressed the urgent need for open conversations, policy-level interventions, and sustainable access to sanitary products so that no girl has to suffer in silence or compromise on her education and well-being. Prominent Social worker Syed

Aijaz Kashani praised the initiative, stating: "Menstrual hygiene is not just a women's issue; it is a matter of dignity, public health, and social responsibility. It is upon us as a society to ensure that no girl is left behind due to a lack of basic necessities." Renowned Social worker and sportsperson Miss Peer Mehak, inspiring young girls, and said "Menstruation should never be a barrier to education or ambition. Every girl deserves access to hygiene products, just as she deserves equal opportunities in academics and sports." Noted Educationist Salim Mir advocated for menstrual health education to be integrated into the school curriculum, ensuring that young minds are equipped with the right knowledge and confidence to navigate this natural process. Initiatives like "Eva Safety Door," Irfana Zargar has been striving to make menstrual hygiene products freely available in schools, colleges, and public spaces.

## Overloaded Vehicle seized at Bhardarwah; FIR filed for endangering human lives

■ HT News Network

JAMMU, MARCH 21: Continuing the drive against Motor Vehicle Act violation, the Traffic Police National Highway, under the supervision of SSP NHW Rohit Baskotra, registered a FIR for overloading and endangering the human lives at Bhardarwah Sector. Traffic Police team of Traffic Sub-Division Doda-Kishtwar led by ASI Shafid Ahmed SO (T) Bhardarwah, under the supervision of Dy SP (T) Doda-Kishtwar and SSP (T) NHW Ramban seized a Vehicle (Mini Bus) bearing registration No:-JK06B/6437 during a routine inspection at Bhardarwah Sector today.

During Traffic checking, it was found that the vehicle was overloaded with 15 excess Passengers against the seating capacity of 25, as per R.C and hence endangering human lives.

A case FIR No. 35/2025 U/S 281/125 BNS stands registered at Police Station Bhardarwah. The Vehicle has been seized on the spot and further investigation of the case is going on. This was the 3rd consecutive FIR filed against overloading amid the special drive launched by the Traffic Police, NHW. Besides this, regular action is being taken against visible offences especially use of electronic devices, not wearing the seat belt by Traffic violators, not wearing crash helmets and underage driving.

While sharing the details, SSP Traffic Rohit Baskotra said that stringent action is being taken against MV Act Violators amid a sustained drive launched by Traffic Police NHW. "Traffic Police have published a detailed advisory for all types of commuters travelling on NHW in which parents were also advised not to send their wards to school in private vehicles being used.

## DC Ganderbal finalizes arrangements for Shab-e-Qadr, Jumat-ul-Vida, Eid-ul-Fitr, Navratra

■ HT News Network

Ganderbal, March 21: Deputy Commissioner Ganderbal, Jatin Kishore, today chaired a meeting to finalize arrangements for upcoming religious occasions including Shab-e-Qadr, Jumat-ul-Vida, Eid-ul-Fitr, and Navratra.

The meeting was attended by senior officers from the district administration, police, health, PDD, Jal Shakti, FCS&CA, and other concerned departments.

During the meeting, the DC directed officials to ensure adequate availability of essential services, including power and water supply, sanitation, transport and traffic management, to facilitate smooth observance of these significant occasions.

Special emphasis was placed on market regulation, ensuring the availability of essential commodities, and preventing overpricing and hoarding.

The Health Department was instructed to keep emergency medical services on high alert, with special arrangements at major religious and congregation sites.

The Traffic and Police Departments were directed to implement effective traffic management plans, particularly around mosques and shrines. Additionally, the Municipal Council Ganderbal was asked to ensure cleanliness and sanitation in all public places.

The DC emphasized interdepartmental coordination to address any emergent issues promptly.

He also urged the public to cooperate with the administration and celebrate these occasions in a spirit of harmony and brotherhood.

## DSEK kickstarts mega plantation drive across all schools of valley

■ HT News Network



Srinagar, MARCH, 21: Director School Education Kashmir, Dr. G.N. Ittoo today kick started a mega plantation drive across all the schools of Kashmir division by planting seedlings at High School Chowgund Verinag Anantnag during the culmination event of ensuing Grand Enrolment Drive 2025.

Speaking on the occasion, he stated that during ongoing special enrolment drive in Kashmir valley more than 50,000 students have been enrolled since the reopening of schools.

Ittoo emphasized the department's commitment to ensure maximum student enrolment, particularly in far-flung areas, where the drive will continue.

Additionally, he informed that career counselling sessions for Class 11 students are being conducted across schools to guide them in making informed subject choices for their higher studies.

Addressing the students and local community, Dr. Ittoo outlined various initiatives aimed at enhancing the quality of education in government schools. He stressed that the department remains dedicated to creating a more robust and student-friendly learning environment.

Meanwhile, Dr. Ittoo also launched a Mega Plantation Drive in the school premises, reinforcing the importance of environmental conservation among students, which shall continue in all the schools of the Kashmir Division

The programme was attended by Chief Education officer Anantnag, District Development Council (DDC) members, school authorities, teachers, parents, and students. The DDC representatives also interacted with students and encouraged them to take full advantage of the government's educational initiatives. The programme was attended by Chief Education officer Anantnag, District Development Council (DDC) members, school authorities, teachers, parents, and students. The DDC representatives also interacted with students and encouraged them to take full advantage of the government's educational initiatives.

## DC Ganderbal reviews implementation of Eco-Sensitive Zone for Thajwas Wildlife Sanctuary

■ HT News Network

Ganderbal, March 21: Deputy Commissioner Ganderbal, Jatin Kishore today chaired a meeting to discuss the implementation of the Eco-Sensitive Zone (ESZ) notification for Thajwas Wildlife Sanctuary in line with the directives of the Supreme Court of India.

The meeting was attended by Chief Town Planner, Kashmir, Assistant Commissioner Revenue, Assistant Commissioner Development, Sub-Divisional Magistrate Kangan, DFO Sind Division, DFO Wildlife and other officials.

Discussions centered on the regulation of activities within the ESZ to protect the fragile ecosystem of the sanctuary.



DFO Wildlife informed that activities such as mining, stone quarrying, crushing units, operation of band saw machines, establishment of pollution-causing industries, and construction of major hydroelectric projects are strictly prohibited within the Eco-Sensitive Zone.

DC emphasized the need for sustainable ecotourism, ensuring

that tourism-related activities are conducted in an environmentally responsible manner without disturbing the region's biodiversity and ecological balance.

The district administration reaffirmed its commitment to implementing strict environmental safeguards while promoting sustainable development in the region.







# Lok Sabha passes demands for grants of Jal Shakti Ministry by voice vote

## AGENCIES

NEW DELHI, MAR 21 (UND)

The Lok Sabha on Friday passed the Demands for Grants under the control of the Ministry of Jal Shakti for 2025-26 by voice vote.

Replying on the discussion, Union Jal Shakti Minister CR Patil said that the Modi government understands the importance of water and has provided adequate funds for its management.

Patil stated that while the previous United Progressive Alliance (UPA) government allocated Rs 1.2 lakh crore to the water sector over a decade, the Modi government has allocated over Rs 4.29 lakh crore to the sector in the same time-frame.

He said that to ensure that everyone in the country gets clean drinking water continuously, 25 lakh women have been trained across the country, who will be able to check the quality of drinking water at the local level. For this, they have been provided kits.

The Minister said that



the government is making every effort to ensure that no one has to drink contaminated water. He emphasised that clean drinking water is a vital health service and will help save four lakh children in the country from diarrhoea.

Patil also noted that the positive impact of providing clean water is evident in every region.

He stated that the construction of crores of toilets across the country has transformed the sanitation habits of 60 crore people and mentioned that various initiatives have been undertaken to enhance irrigation capacity nationwide.

To ensure water reach-

es every farm, a provision of 1,100 crore has been made. Additionally, necessary steps are being taken to complete the Ken-Betwa River Linking Project, and funds are being allocated to finish the pending Polavaram scheme by 2026.

Patil stated that significant focus is being given to the river cleanliness campaign, leading to improved water quality in the Ganga. He emphasised that this reflects ongoing efforts, which have also resulted in better river flow.

The Minister encouraged all members to contribute to water conservation in their respective areas and assured that the Ministry would provide all necessary support. He

emphasised that to prevent any irregularities in the scheme's implementation, a thorough investigation is conducted, and detailed records are maintained of each beneficiary and household receiving the scheme's benefits.

Patil stated that complaints regarding water supply are addressed in coordination with the states. He also emphasised that any irregularities in the process will not be tolerated. Access to water is a fundamental right of the people, and it is the government's responsibility to ensure its provision. Those responsible for any wrongdoing will face appropriate consequences.

He highlighted the importance of river interlinking and mentioned that Detailed Project Reports (DPRs) for 11 projects have been completed. He noted that this is primarily a state matter, and efforts are being made in coordination with state governments.

The Minister also stated that Prime Minister Narendra Modi has directed work

on linking 221 km of rivers between Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh. While water management falls under state jurisdiction, the central government is implementing this initiative under the Jal Jeevan Mission to ensure tap water reaches every household in the country.

To provide clean water to all, the Central Government, under the leadership of Modi, launched the Jal Jeevan Mission in 2019. Since then, crores of people have benefited from the scheme. It remains a top priority for the Government of India, with regular review meetings held to address any issues and ensure its smooth implementation.

He also said that in order to ensure that every household gets the benefits of this scheme, the Prime Minister has extended the duration of the scheme till 2028 and all the problems related to it will be resolved. Homes that still lack tap water connections will be included in the scheme within the next three years.

# SC Collegium recommends transfer of Justice Yashwant Varma to Allahabad High Court

## AGENCIES

NEW DELHI, MAR 21 (UND)

The Supreme Court Collegium, led by Chief Justice of India (CJI) Sanjiv Khanna, has recommended transfer of Justice Yashwant Varma from Delhi High Court to his parent High Court in Allahabad after a "huge pile of cash" was reportedly recovered from his residence.

Justice Varma, who was appointed as a judge of Delhi High Court in October 2021, has landed in a controversy after media reports emerged about cash being recovered from this official residence.

Meanwhile, Justice Yashwant Varma did not attend the court today and his absence was officially announced by his staff in the court this morning.

According to the reports, there was a fire incident at his residence.

At that time, Justice Varma was not in town and his family members contacted the fire brigade and police.

After the flames were



extinguished, a "huge pile of unaccounted cash" was reportedly found inside a room.

It has been reported that the local police informed their superiors, who escalated the matter to top government officials.

The revelation ultimately reached CJI Khanna, who took a serious view of the matter and convened a meeting of the five-judge Supreme Court Collegium.

The Collegium decided that Justice Varma should be transferred without delay. While some members of the Collegium felt that a transfer was sufficient, some others opined that merely shifting him to another High Court could damage the judiciary's reputation and

public trust.

There was a view reportedly that Justice Varma should be asked to resign and, if he refused, an in-house inquiry should be initiated as a precursor to possible removal through parliamentary proceedings.

According to the in-house procedure established by the Supreme Court in 1999 to address allegations of misconduct against judges, the CJI is authorized to seek an explanation from the judge in question. If the response is unsatisfactory or if a deeper investigation is deemed necessary, the CJI can form an inquiry panel comprising a Supreme Court judge and the chief justices of two High Courts.

# RSS flags Manipur unrest, North-South narrative at ABPS meet

## AGENCIES

BENGALURU, MAR 21 (UND)

The prolonged unrest in Manipur and emerging attempts to foster divisions along North-South and linguistic lines were among the key concerns highlighted by Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) leader CR Mukunda at the Akhil Bharatiya Pratinidhi Sabha (ABPS) in Bengaluru on Friday.

Mukunda acknowledged that the situation in Manipur has remained volatile for the past 20 months, despite recent political and administrative interventions by the central government offering a glimmer of hope. He stressed the need for sustained efforts to rebuild trust and restore normalcy in the region.

Expressing concern over divisive narratives, he warned against forces attempting to disrupt



national unity by manipulating regional and linguistic differences, particularly in the context of the ongoing delimitation discourse. He affirmed that RSS volunteers and functionaries are actively working to promote harmony, with a special focus on southern states.

Moving on to cultural matters, Mukunda underscored the significance of the Mahakumbh at Prayagraj, terming it a momentous event that reinforced cultural pride and instilled self-confidence within

Hindu society, both in India and globally. He lauded the efforts of the Uttar Pradesh state government and the Union government for their infrastructural developments, which facilitated the smooth organisation of such large-scale events.

He highlighted the extensive welfare initiatives undertaken during the Mahakumbh, including Sakshyam, a public health programme that conducted 2,37,964 eye examinations, distributed 1,63,652 spectacles free of

cost, and facilitated 17,690 cataract surgeries. He also noted the 'One Thaali, One Thaili' (One Plate, One Non-Plastic Bag) campaign by an affiliated organisation, which garnered considerable media attention domestically and internationally.

Reflecting on historical contributions, Mukunda pointed out the 300th birth anniversary of Ahilya Bai Holkar, celebrated last year. Various organisations and functionaries conducted discussions, both online and offline, to revisit her administrative reforms and their relevance in strengthening women's leadership in governance and social transformation.

He concluded by stating that a comprehensive report on the discussions and assessments presented at the ABPS will be made available for distribution in due course.

# RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat inaugurates ABPS in Bengaluru

## AGENCIES

BENGALURU, MAR 21 (UND)

Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) chief Mohan Bhagwat inaugurated the three-day Akhil Bharatiya Pratinidhi Sabha (ABPS) at Janaseva Vidya Kendra here on Friday.

The ABPS, the highest decision-making body of the RSS, is convening from March 21-23 to discuss organisational expansion, key national issues, and preparations for the centenary celebrations of the Sangh, which will commence from Vijaya Dashami 2025.

The meeting will be passing two key resolutions - one focusing on the



persecution of Hindus in Bangladesh, highlighting concerns over religious violence and proposing a structured response, and another marking RSS' 100-year journey, underscoring its contributions and future vision.

Prominent attendees include representa-

tives from RSS-affiliated organisations such as the Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh, Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad, and Vishwa Hindu Parishad. BJP national president JP Nadda is also expected to participate, with deliberations likely to include upcoming elections in

Bihar and other key political developments.

A special statement will be issued to commemorate the 500th birth anniversary of Rani Abbakka, the Tuluva queen known for her resistance against Portuguese forces.

The ABPS will also discuss the 'Panch Parivartan' strategy, which encompasses social harmony, family values, environmental consciousness, self-reliance, and civic duties. As part of its centenary preparations, RSS has planned 95 training camps between April and June, aimed at engaging volunteers across different age groups. The last ABPS meeting was held in Nagpur in 2023.

# Heathrow Airport in London closed due to power outage from nearby fire

## AGENCIES

LONDON, MAR 21 (UND)

London's Heathrow Airport remains closed until midnight Friday due to a "significant power outage" caused by a fire at a nearby electricity substation, a spokesperson said.

The outage has affected the entire airport, with no clear timeline for power restoration. "To maintain the safety of our passengers and colleagues, we have no choice but to close Heathrow until 23:59 GMT on March 21," the spokesperson added.

Passengers are advised not to travel to the airport until further notice. Over 1,300 flights, including 120 already airborne, are affected, according to Sky News, citing Flightra-

dar24, a live flight-tracking website. Some planes have been diverted to other airports, including London Gatwick Airport, those in Paris and Shannon Airport in Ireland.

British Airways, Heathrow's largest carrier, urged customers not to go to the airport until further notice and said it is working to update them on travel options.

London Heathrow, one of the world's busiest airports, handled a record 83.9 million passengers last year.

The fire that broke out in Hayes, north of the airport has also left around 16,000 nearby homes without power.

The cause remains unknown, but the National Grid is working to restore electricity as quickly as possible.

# Karnataka CM Siddaramaiah vows action in honeytrap scandal

## AGENCIES

BENGALURU, MAR 21 (UND)

Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Friday assured the State Assembly that an inquiry would be conducted into allegations of an attempt to honeytrap several ministers and political leaders.

Responding to the Opposition's demand for a judicial probe, Siddaramaiah stated that due process would be followed. "Once a complaint is filed, then an inquiry will be done. There is no question of saving anyone. Already, Home Minister Dr G Parameshwara has ordered a high-level inquiry," he said.

The controversy intensified after Cooperation Minister KN Rajanna claimed that approximately 48 politicians across

various parties had fallen victim to such schemes. He urged the government to launch a comprehensive probe into the matter, highlighting concerns over the use of honey traps to sabotage political careers.

Public Works Minister Satish Jarkiholi corroborated these concerns, stating that while some honey trap attempts were unsuccessful, such incidents have been occurring in Karnataka politics for nearly two decades, affecting members from all major parties.

In light of these revelations, Dr Parameshwara announced a high-level investigation to uncover the truth behind the allegations, aiming to uphold the dignity of the Assembly and ensure transparency in the political sphere.

# Ayodhya foundation of Sanatan Dharma: Yogi

## AGENCIES

AYODHYA (UP), MAR 21 (UND)

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Friday said that Ayodhya is the foundation of Sanatan Dharma and it is not just a city, but a source of inspiration for religion and literature."

The Chief Minister was addressing the inaugural session of the Timeless Ayodhya Literature Festival as the chief guest. He began the event with a symbolic gesture by offering water to an Ashoka plant amidst Vedic chanting.

Applauding Prime Minister Narendra Modi, he said that the PM has revived Indian traditions by seamlessly blending heritage with development, marking a new beginning for the nation.

Highlighting the remarkable rise in Ayodhya's spiritual prominence, Yogi said that while only 2.34 lakh devotees visited the city in 2016-17, today over 16 crore people are arriving to catch a glimpse of Lord Shri Ram. "This

reflects the growing glory and grandeur of Ayodhya," he said.

He said, "Ayodhya is the foundation of Sanatan Dharma. It is not just a city, but a source of inspiration for religion and literature."

Reflecting on the compositions of the Ramayana and Ramcharitmanas by Maharishi Valmiki and Saint Tulsidas, he said that Ayodhya has long been a centre for literature and culture. "Ayodhya is the spiritual heart of Sanatan Dharma. It was here that Lord Manu laid the foundation of human religion, and this sacred land became the karmabhoomi of Lord Shri Ram, an incarnation of Shri Hari Vishnu," he said.

The CM said, "The Ramayana emerged as the world's first epic, offering a new direction to literature. Just as Maharishi Valmiki immortalised the Ram Katha, every creation associated with Ayodhya continues to resonate deeply with people today. The Ramayana

and Ramcharitmanas are still read and cherished in every household across India and in corners of the world."

Discussing the Ram Mandir movement, he emphasised that Ayodhya deserves the respect it has long been entitled to. He shared how, when the plan to celebrate Deepotsava in Ayodhya was introduced in 2017, some people raised doubts, but today millions of devotees participate in the celebration, making it a massive success.

On the topic of literature, Yogi said that it reflects society's values and plays a crucial role in preserving culture while guiding the community in the right direction. He acknowledged the disruption of traditional reading and writing habits in today's digital age but expressed confidence that events like the literature festival would help revive these practices.

Congratulating the team behind the Timeless Ayodhya Literature Festival, he said

that such events would inspire future generations and elevate Indian literature to new heights. He said that the festival demonstrated that Ayodhya is not just a religious centre, but also a revered land of literature and culture.

The CM also shared a personal anecdote from his visit to Europe, where he had a conversation with a taxi driver from Punjab. "When asked about his origin, the driver initially hesitated before revealing that he was from Pakistan. When I asked why he had identified himself as Indian first, the driver explained, 'We feel safer saying we are Indian. If we say Pakistani, who knows what might happen'," he said.

He highlighted that this reflected a broader global respect for India, but also pointed to the disdain toward those who fostered terrorism. He said that today, people take pride in identifying as citizens of India, particularly those from UP.



## Daily physical activity, good sleep key to boost happiness, cut down stress: Study

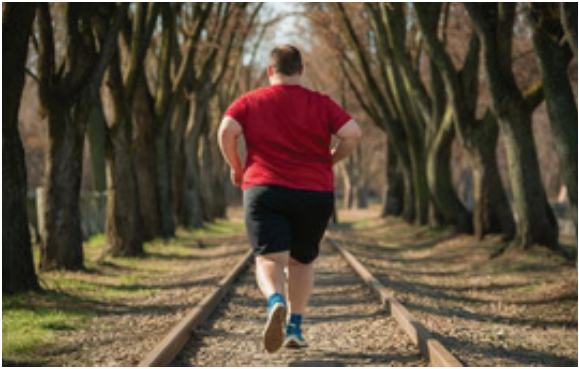
AGENCIES  
NEW DELHI

Want to reduce your stress levels? Daily physical activity and adequate sleep can increase happiness and cut down levels of stress, according to a study on Wednesday.

Researchers at the universities of Harvard (US) and Oxford (UK) looked at predictors of happiness and well-being using data from smartwatches and smartphones to inform global public policies and product development.

The pilot study, in collaboration with smart-watch provider Garmin and included data from over 10,000 global participants.

Other key findings showed that emotional stability varied by age, with older adults showing



more stability and younger adults more variability.

The study also demonstrated high retention rates, suggesting participants found value in self-monitoring emotions during the day. The respondents were happiest when involved in cultural and social activities, eating, or spending time with friends and family.

Several previous studies have shown that exercise

helps manage stress better.

It is because exercise majorly helps regulate stress hormones; and releases endorphins - good for boosting mood, and relieving pain, leading to a sense of well-being.

Regular exercise is also known to improve sleep quality, but it is often disrupted by stress, further contributing to stress reduction.

Exercise boosts self-

esteem and improves mood, leading to a greater sense of control and resilience in the face of stress.

Stress is a major health concern. It can lead to mental health conditions like anxiety and depression. Stress can also worsen noncommunicable diseases like diabetes, hypertension, obesity, and cancers.

Other health conditions associated with stress include gastrointestinal problems like stomach pain and irritable bowel syndrome; weakened immune system; and skin problems. It can also impact the menstrual cycle and fertility.

About 17 million working days are lost every year globally because of ill-health caused by work stress, depression or anxiety.

## NIT Rourkela's smart IoT-enabled device to monitor food quality in real time

AGENCIES  
ROURKELA

Researchers from the National Institute of Technology (NIT) Rourkela have developed an Internet of Things-enabled smart device to monitor the quality of ingredients in processed food.

The colourimeter, developed in partnership with teams from the University of the Philippines Los Banos, Philippines, tracks colour and temperature changes in real-time, making it especially useful for studying oleo gels -- fat alternatives used in processed foods.

Many processed foods rely on solid fats for texture and stability, but these often contain unhealthy trans and saturated fats, increasing the risk of cardiovascular diseases and obesity.

To address this, the food industry has been exploring oleo gels, which convert liquid oils into a



gel-like form by using additives such as waxes, plant-based polymers, or other structuring agents and offer a healthier alternative.

However, they are prone to instability due to oil migration resulting from poor crystallisation, affecting food quality. Unlike traditional methods that require expensive lab equipment and skilled technicians, the new cost-effective device detects subtle colour changes in oleo gels during crystalli-

sation.

This colourimetric approach provides an effective way to monitor oleo gel stability without requiring complex instrumentation.

The integration of IoT technology allows for remote monitoring, data logging, and automated analysis, making it suitable for both research and industrial applications.

"This smart device has the potential to improve food safety and quality control processes signifi-

cantly. In addition to oleo gels, it could be used to monitor various other food products, where colour and temperature play a crucial role in determining the properties and stability of the food products," said Prof. Kunal Pal, Biotechnology and Medical Engineering, NIT Rourkela.

"In addition to this, the device is also able to detect the freshness of several food products. For example, dairy products, bakery products, confectionery, and plant-based meat substitutes could all benefit from real-time quality assessment using this technology," Pal added.

In the paper, published in the Journal of Food Engineering, the research team envisions that this device will not only enhance food science research but also empower food manufacturers to implement better quality control practices at a lower cost.

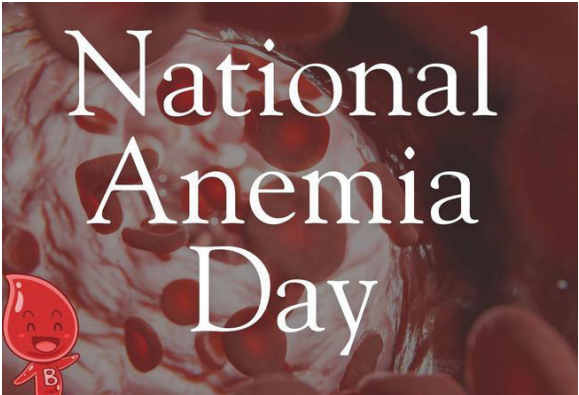
## National Anemia Day: Causes, Symptoms & Govt Action to Tackle Anemia

AGENCIES

Anemia continues to be a significant health challenge in India, with over 67% of children aged 6-59 months, 52% of pregnant women, and 57% of women aged 15-49 years suffering from anemia, according to the National Family Health Survey 5 (2019-21).

The World Health Organization defines anemia as a condition in which the number of red blood cells or the hemoglobin concentration is lower than normal. It occurs when there isn't enough hemoglobin in the body to carry oxygen to the organs and tissues. Hemoglobin is a protein in red blood cells that carries oxygen throughout the body, giving blood its red color and also playing a role in carbon dioxide transport.

In severe cases, anemia can lead to poor cognitive and motor development in children. It can also pose significant risks for pregnant women and their babies.



As India observes National Anemia Day on March 21 each year, let's explore the causes of anemia, its treatment options, and the steps the government is taking to combat the rising cases.

### Causes of Anemia

Several factors contribute to anemia, including nutrient deficiencies, inadequate diet or poor absorption of nutrients, infections, inflammation, chronic diseases, gynecological and obstetric conditions, and inherited red blood cell disorders.

However, the most common cause of anemia is iron deficiency, primarily due to insufficient

dietary iron intake. Deficiencies in vitamin A, folate, vitamin B12, and riboflavin can also result in anemia due to their crucial roles in hemoglobin synthesis.

### Symptoms

Common symptoms of anemia include fatigue, reduced physical capacity, and shortness of breath. Other signs include dizziness or light-headedness, cold hands and feet, headaches, pale mucous membranes (in the mouth, nose, etc.), pale skin, pale nails, rapid breathing and heart rate, dizziness when standing up, and easy bruising.

### Treatment

Anemia can be effectively treated and prevented, depending on its severity. Key approaches include incorporating iron-rich foods into the diet, such as lean red meats, fish, poultry, legumes, and fortified cereals, along with foods rich in vitamin C to enhance iron absorption. Supplements may also be prescribed by physicians.

In addition, maintaining good hygiene, such as washing hands with soap and water and using clean toilets, can help prevent infections that lead to anemia. Individuals affected by malaria should consult a doctor immediately, as malaria can cause anemia.

Foods That Help the Body Absorb Iron

Healthcare providers recommend a healthy lifestyle to manage anemia. Iron-rich foods, such as lean red meats, fish, poultry, legumes, fortified cereals, dark green leafy vegetables, and vitamin C-rich foods like fruits and vegetables, can help improve iron absorption in the body.

## HT-HEALTH

## SE Asia carries highest global burden of oral diseases, mouth cancers: WHO

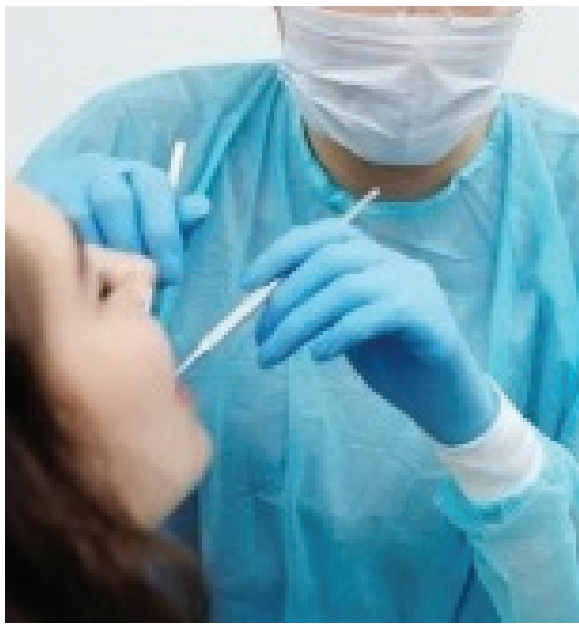
AGENCIES  
NEW DELHI

South-East Asia has the highest global burden of oral diseases and mouth cancers, according to the World Health Organization (WHO) on World Oral Health Day on Thursday.

World Oral Health Day is marked annually on March 20 to draw attention to oral health -- a key indicator of overall health, well-being, and quality of life. The theme this year is "a happy mouth is a happy mind."

Oral diseases are among the most common non-communicable diseases worldwide. It affects an estimated 3.5 billion people.

"Among the six WHO regions, South-East Asia reports the highest number -- approximately 900 million cases of oral diseases and conditions -- reflecting the region's large population," said Saima Wazed, WHO



Regional Director for South-East Asia.

"Our region also has the highest burden of oral cancer among all WHO regions. This is the leading cancer among males in the region, accounting for 11.2 per cent of all cases," she added.

The Regional Director

noted that oral diseases "cause physical symptoms, functional limitations, and a detrimental impact on emotional, mental, and social well-being".

A major reason for South-East Asia's growing poor oral health is the high consumption of smokeless tobacco and areca nut --

proven carcinogens causing oral cancer.

"A recent analysis revealed that one in two cases of oral cancer in our region is attributable to smokeless tobacco or areca nut consumption. This essentially indicates the number of cases that could be prevented if smokeless tobacco or areca nut consumption were eliminated from the population, emphasising the potential impact of primary prevention," Wazed said.

Wazed called the countries of the South-East Asia Region and partners for accelerated action to achieve universal health coverage for oral health by 2030.

Meanwhile, the WHO is in the process of formulating a regional roadmap to address the burden of oral cancer. It will guide countries in regionally relevant strategies to address the burden of oral cancer and other health outcomes.

## Researchers test new treatment for chronic kidney disease in dogs

AGENCIES  
JERUSALEM

Researchers in Israel have tested a potential treatment for chronic kidney disease (CKD) in dogs.

The study, published in the Journal of Veterinary Internal Medicine, examined the effects of paricalcitol -- a synthetic form of vitamin D, Xinhua news agency reported.

The team from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem tested paricalcitol on two common CKD complications: renal secondary hyperparathyroidism (RHPT) and proteinuria, or excess protein in the urine.

CKD is a progressive condition that leads to kidney failure, primarily affecting older dogs but also occurring in younger ones.

RHPT develops when damaged kidneys fail to regulate minerals like calcium and phosphorus,



causing elevated parathyroid hormone (PTH) levels that can weaken bones and harm organs.

The trial involved 13 dogs with CKD, treated with either paricalcitol or a placebo over two 12-week periods.

Researchers found that proteinuria worsened in dogs given a placebo but

remained stable in those receiving paricalcitol, suggesting the drug may help protect kidney function.

Some treated dogs experienced mild increases in calcium levels, though dose adjustments helped manage the condition.

While the findings are encouraging, further studies are needed to assess

the long-term safety and effectiveness of the treatment.

CKD in dogs, also known as chronic renal failure, is a progressive condition where the kidneys gradually lose their ability to function properly, leading to various symptoms like increased thirst and urination, vomiting, and weight loss.

The common symptoms include increased thirst, peeing more, decreased appetite, weight loss, vomiting, and low energy.

In the early stages of CKD, there may be no symptoms because the kidneys can still manage. Ageing and kidney infections are the most common causes of CKD in dogs.

While the condition is a progressive one, there is no cure. However, early diagnosis and management can significantly improve a dog's quality of life and lifespan.

## Over 96,000 vehicles registered as 'adapted' for disabled since 2020: Centre

AGENCIES  
NEW DELHI

More than 96,000 vehicles have been registered as adapted vehicles for persons with disabilities since 2020, the government said in the Parliament on Friday.

"Adapted vehicle" can be defined as a motor vehicle either specially designed and constructed, or to which alterations have been made for the use of a person suffering from any physical defect or disability, and used solely by or for such person.

"A total of 96,265 vehicles were registered as adapted vehicles during the period of January 1, 2020, to March 19, 2025," said Bhupathiraju Srinivasa Varma, the Minister of State for Steel and Heavy Industries in a written reply in the Rajya Sabha.

Section 52 of the Motor Vehicles Act, 1988 read with Rule 47A, Rule 47B & Rule 112 of Central Motor



Vehicles Rules, 1989 contains provisions related to alteration or retrofitment and endorsement of alteration of vehicle, the Minister said.

People with disabilities such as orthopaedic physical disability of equal to or greater than 40 per cent can purchase the adapted cars at a concessional rate of Goods and Services Tax (GST), with certificates from the Ministry of Heavy Industries (MHI).

As per the Ministry, the concession can be availed for motor vehicles of length not exceeding 4000 mm only.

Petrol, LPG or compressed natural gas-driven vehicles of engine capacity not exceeding 1200 cc; and diesel-driven vehicles of engine capacity not exceeding 1500 cc.

All vehicles sold on the strength of a certificate issued by MHI and with concessional GST would

be registered as "Adapted Vehicle", as per Motor Vehicle Act, Varma said.

The Central government also assists in schemes to assist disabled persons with the purchase/fitting of aids and appliances like motorised tricycles, wheelchairs, prostheses and orthosis, walking sticks, accessible smartphones, smart cane, low vision aids, and hearing aids.



# Defending champions KKR begin title defence against RCB

AGENCIES  
KOLKATA, MAR 21

The 18th season of the Indian Premier League (IPL) is set to commence on Saturday with defending champions Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR) taking on Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB) in a high-voltage clash at Eden Gardens. KKR, a three-time IPL champion, will be led by Ajinkya Rahane this season as they look to secure back-to-back titles. The side boasts a formidable batting lineup, with the experienced Sunil Narine expected to continue his stellar form alongside Quinton de Kock at the top. Rahane and Venkatesh Iyer will provide stability in the middle order, while finishers Rinku Singh, Andre Russell, and Ramandeep Singh will be key in the death overs. The bowling attack, spearheaded by South African pacer Anrich Nortje, also features Harshit Rana, Vaibhav Arora, and Varun Chakravarthy. KKR's spin department remains a major strength, with



Narine and Chakravarthy expected to play a crucial role on the Eden Gardens surface. Meanwhile, RCB, still in pursuit of their maiden IPL title, will be led by Rajat Patidar. The Bengaluru-based franchise will rely on the batting prowess of Virat Kohli, Phil Salt, Liam Livingstone, and Patidar to anchor their innings. Kohli, who amassed 741 runs last season, remains the lynchpin of their batting unit. RCB's allrounders, including Krunal Pandya, Jacob Bethell, and Tim David, add depth to both departments. Their pace attack, bolstered by the inclusion of Josh Hazlewood and Bhuvneshwar

er-packed lineup remains capable of pulling off an upset, setting the stage for an enthralling IPL 2025 opener. Teams Kolkata Knight Riders: Manish Pandey, Ajinkya Rahane (Captain), Rinku Singh, Angkrish Raghuvanshi, Rovman Powell, Anukul Roy, Ramandeep Singh, Venkatesh Iyer, Moeen Ali, Sunil Narine, Andre Russell, Quinton de Kock, Rahmanullah Gurbaz, Luvnith Sisodia, Varun Chakravarthy, Mayank Markande, Vaibhav Arora, Harshit Rana, Anrich Nortje, Spencer Johnson, Chetan Sakariya. Royal Challengers Bangalore: Virat Kohli, Rajat Patidar (Captain), Devdutt Padikkal, Swastik Chikara, Tim David, Krunal Pandya, Liam Livingstone, Manoj Bhandage, Jacob Bethell, Romario Shepherd, Swapnil Singh, Mohit Rathee, Philip Salt, Jitesh Sharma, Josh Hazlewood, Bhuvneshwar Kumar, Lungi Ngidi, Rasikh Dar Salam, Suyash Sharma, Yash Dayal, Nuwan Thushara, Abhinandan Singh.

# Ahead of the IPL season, Airtel augments network at Chepauk and other stadiums

AGENCIES  
CHENNAI, MAR 21

In preparation for the upcoming Indian Premier League (IPL) season beginning tomorrow at Kolkata, Bharti Airtel has made arrangements at the M. A. Chidambaram Stadium, commonly known as the Chepauk Stadium here and other stadiums across the country. This would ensure a seamless network experience for the anticipated crowd of nearly 100,000 cricketing fans during the matches.

Airtel has enhanced four existing sites around the stadium and strategically installed six macro sites along with 12 cells inside the ground, each with a high bandwidth capacity and deployed a supplementary Cell on Wheels (COW) within the stadium vicinity. This augmentation will significantly improve voice and data connectivity for Airtel customers attending the matches. The network upgrades have been strategically planned to accommodate the expected high volume of spectators, a press release said here today. Tarun Virmani, CEO, Tamil Nadu, Bharti Airtel, said "As excitement builds for the much-anticipated IPL tournament, we have significantly reinforced our mobile network across the Chepauk stadium. With thousands of fans expected, our efforts will ensure that customers enjoy an uninterrupted connection, allowing them to share and experience every thrilling moment of the game." To offer a seamless and ubiquitous network experience across Chennai city,

extensive network optimization has been conducted at the airport, railway stations and all other tourist locations, he said. All the key premium hotels in and around the city have also undergone comprehensive network assessments to enhance coverage, he added. Airtel has taken measures specifically for the IPL and have augmented its network across all the stadiums in the country to cater to the cricket fever starting from March and continuing on till May 2025.

# Hasan Nawaz's blistering ton powers Pak to win

AGENCIES  
AUCKLAND, MAR 21

A scintillating unbeaten century from Hasan Nawaz propelled Pakistan to a dominant nine-wicket victory over New Zealand in the third T20I at Auckland on Friday. Chasing a target of 205, Pakistan made light work of the run chase, reaching 207 for 1 in just 16 overs. Nawaz, who had registered ducks in his first two international matches, smashed an unbeaten 105 off just 45 balls, laced with 10 fours and 7 sixes at an astounding strike rate of 233.33. He found ample support from captain Salman Agha, who



did not run away with the game. Abrar Ahmed and Abbas Afridi chipped in with two wickets each to restrict the Kiwis. Pakistan's chase was relentless from the start, with Nawaz taking the attack to the bowlers. The Kiwis struggled to contain the run flow as their bowlers, barring Duffy (1/37), proved ineffective against Pakistan's aggressive approach. With this victory, Pakistan keeps the series alive, showcasing their batting depth and bowling prowess. The teams will now move to the fourth T20I, where New Zealand will look to bounce back and seal the five-match series.

# FIFA: Vinicius Jr's bags Brazil victory as Peru snatch a lifeline

AGENCIES  
BRASILIA, MAR 21

Vinicius Jr's last-gasp goal snatched Brazil victory over Colombia, while Paraguay overcame Chile and Peru returned to winning ways against Bolivia. Luis Diaz was moments away from turning Brazil's hangman once again. This Brasilia battle would, however, belong to a winger in canary-yellow rather than black. Vinicius Jr won a penalty early on and then scored his first goal in FIFA World Cup 26™ qualifying, deep into stoppage time, to snatch the W. Elsewhere, centre-back Omar Alderete made it two winners in three games with the only goal for Paraguay against Chile, while Peru beat Bolivia to move off the bottom and give themselves a shot at reaching the global finals. Ecuador-Venezuela and Uruguay-Argentina will complete the round on Friday, according to a FIFA media release. (1st) Argentina-25 points, (2nd) Brazil-21 points, (3rd) Uruguay - 20 points, (4th) Paraguay-20 points (5th) Ecuador-19 points, (5th) Colombia-19 points, (7th) Bolivia-13 points, (8th) Venezuela-12 points, (9th) Peru-10 points, (10th) Chile-9 points.



Paraguay 1-0 Chile: Paraguay goal: Omar Alderete (60). Omar Alderete grabbed the only goal as Paraguay overcame Chile in Asuncion on Matchday 13 of South American qualifying for the FIFA World Cup 26. The result moved La Albirroja up to fourth - at least temporarily - and heightened the troubles of La Roja. The two No7s had the best chances of the first half. First, Lucas Cepeda forced Paraguay goalkeeper Gatito Fernandez into smart save, before Ramon Sosa stylishly shuffled inside two challenges, only to sky his shot. Paraguay made the breakthrough in the second. Juan Caceres headed an Enciso free-kick towards goal, Tony Sanabria flicked it on, and Alderete struck it home at the back post. Brazil 2-1 Colombia:

Peru 3-1 Bolivia: Peru goals: Andy Polo (37), Paolo Guerrero (45), Edison Flores (82): Bolivia goal: Miguel Terceros (58). Polo pounced on a loose ball to put Peru ahead, before playing in Guerrero, who muscled off his marker and steered it home to double the lead. A handball got Bolivia back into it, Terceros just beating Pedro Gallese from the spot. La Verde threw everything at their hosts thereafter, but a poor clearance enabled La Blanquiroja to put the contest to bed. Flores's first shot was parried, but he fired home to rebound to hike hopes of a great escape. World Cup participations: Brazil (22), Argentina (18), Uruguay (14), Chile (9), Paraguay (8), Colombia (6), Peru (5), Ecuador (4, Bolivia (3), Venezuela (0). Best World Cup finish: Brazil: Champions (1958, 1962, 1970, 1994 & 2002), Argentina: Champions (1978, 1986 & 2022), Uruguay: Champions (1930 & 1950), Chile: Third place (1962), Peru: Quarter finals (1970 & 1978), Colombia: Quarter-finals (2014), Paraguay: Quarter-finals (2010), Ecuador: Last 16 (2006), Bolivia: Group stage (1930, 1950 & 1994).

# Djokovic 'does not agree' with parts of union's lawsuit

AGENCIES  
NEW YORK, MAR 21

Novak Djokovic says he disagrees with parts of the lawsuit brought against tennis governing bodies by the players' union he co-founded. On Tuesday the Professional Tennis Players' Association (PTPA) filed papers criticising the schedule, ranking systems

and control over image rights, the BBC reported. The association is unhappy with the prize money formula designed by the ATP and WTA tours, the "unsustainable" 11-month schedule and "invasive searches of personal devices". PTPA claims there is collusion between the tours and the tournaments, which suppresses

competition in tournaments and may artificially restrict prize money. Record 24-time Grand Slam winner Djokovic co-founded the PTPA in 2020 with Canadian Vasek Pospisil, but he is not among the 12 players as plaintiffs alongside the PTPA. "In general, I felt like I don't need to sign the letter because I want

other players to step up. I've been very active in tennis politics," Djokovic said at the Miami Open on Thursday. "This is a classic lawsuit, so lawyers to lawyers, type of situation. So to be quite frank with you, there are things that I agree with in the lawsuit, and then there are also things that I don't agree with.

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