



DC Srinagar finalizes  
arrangements for Shab-e-  
Qadr, Jumat ul vida,  
Eid-ul-Fitr

PJ07



## BUDGET SESSION 2025

# Promises We Made will be Systematically and Responsibly Fullfilled : CM Omar Abdullah

## Reaffirms commitment to free 200 units of electricity

■ HT News Network

JAMMU, MARCH 25: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah today reiterated his government's commitment to fulfilling all promises made in its manifesto, including the provision of 200 units of free electricity to eligible households.

Responding to supplementary questions from several legislators during the Question Hour of the Ongoing Budget Session in the Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly, the Chief Minister emphasized his government's intent and commitment to delivering

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## Our commitment is for restoration of statehood: CM Omar Abdullah

JAMMU, MARCH 25: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah today reiterated his government's unwavering commitment to the restoration of Jammu and Kashmir's statehood, emphasizing that political theatrics will not alter

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## ₹27.07 Cr released to SMC for street lights installation: CM

JAMMU, MARCH 25: Chief Minister, Omar Abdullah today said that an amount of Rs. 27.07 Cr. has been released to the Srinagar Municipal Committee for installation of street lights. The Chief Minister was replying to a question raised by the Shamim Firdous in the Legislative Assembly. He informed the House that as per the tripartite agreement between HUDD, JKPD&EESL, M/s. EESL is maintaining installation along with warranty replacement during the project period of 07 years ending 2027.

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## 5868 appointment orders issued to beneficiaries under PM Special Package: Dy CM

■ HT News Network

JAMMU, MARCH 25: Deputy Chief Minister, Surinder Choudhary, today said that, out of 6000 posts under PM Special Package for Kashmiri Migrants/Non Migrant Kashmiri Pandits, 5868 appointment orders have been issued to the beneficiaries, so far.

The Deputy Chief Minister was replying to a question



raised by M Y Tarigami in the Legislative Assembly. He said that 5724 posts had been issued up to 2023-24 fiscal while appointment

orders in respect of 144 posts have been issued during the current financial year till date, bringing the total figure to 5868 out of 6000 posts under the package. He said that the remaining 132 posts are at various stages including 42 posts pending due to Court cases.

The Deputy Chief Minister said that the Prime Minister announced Return a Package for Rehabilitation

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## J&K Assembly passes Appropriation Bills, GST Amendment Bill

■ HT News Network

JAMMU, MARCH 25: The Jammu & Kashmir Legislative Assembly today passed two Appropriation Bills, authorizing withdrawal of funds from the Union Territory's Consolidated Fund for the financial years 2024-25 and 2025-26. The Appropriation Bill for the financial year 2024-25 (L.A. Bill No. 2 of 2025) and the Appropriation Bill for 2025-26 (L.A. Bill No.

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## Govt releases Rs 14.75 cr for 4 projects under Khelo India scheme in 2018-19: Satish Sharma

JAMMU, MARCH 25: Minister for Youth Services and Sports, Satish Sharma, said that the Government of India has released Rs 14.75 crore for 4 projects sanctioned under Khelo India Scheme during the year 2018-19, against which Rs 13.67 crore have been expended, so far.

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## Govt working on strengthening existing 4000 health institutions: Sakeena Itoo

■ HT News Network



JAMMU, MARCH 25: Minister for Health and Medical Education, Sakeena Itoo, today informed the House that the government is working on strengthening the 4000 existing health institutions at various levels as per IPHS norms 2022 in order to provide robust medical care facilities to the people. The Minister said this while replying to a question raised by Muzaffar Iqbal Khan. She said that PHC Thanamandi was upgraded to

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## Assembly passes motion for election of three House Committees

■ HT News Network

JAMMU, MARCH 25: The Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly today passed motions for election of members to three House Committees. The motions were introduced by Chief Minister, Omar Abdullah, presented by Speaker Abdul Rahim Rather and passed by the House through a voice vote. The House approved the formation of the Committee on Public Accounts, Commit

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## Amit Shah welcomes 2 groups severing ties with separatists, urges others to follow the suit

Testament of unifying policies of PM Modi, Home Minister, says LoP Sharma

■ HT News Network

SRINAGAR, MAR 25: Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Tuesday said that separatism has become history in Kashmir.

His statement came a day after a close aide of late separatist leader Syed Ali Geelani, and former head of Jammu & Kashmir Democratic Political Movement (DPM), advocate Mohammad Shafi Reshi, publicly



distanced himself from separatist politics and reaffirmed his allegiance to the

country and the supremacy of the Indian Constitution. Reshi strongly criticized the ideology of the Hurriyat Conference, asserting that it failed to address the grievances of the people of Jammu & Kashmir. Another separatist group J&K People's Movement also announced its disassociation from the Hurriyat Conference.

Taking to X, the Union Home Minister, according

TURN ON.....PAGE 02

## No Panchayat bodies exist in J&K, Ladakh at present: Gol

■ HT News Network

SRINAGAR, MAR 25 Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh currently have no elected representatives in their Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) as the tenure of the previous bodies ended in December 2023, and fresh elections have not yet been conducted, the Ministry of Panchayati Raj informed Lok Sabha on Tuesday. The elections for Panchayats in both Union Territories were due last year, but they remain pending. As a result, the governance of local bodies is currently without elected representatives.

Panchayats are responsible for implementing various government schemes related to rural development, employment, and infrastructure. The delay in elections means that these functions

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## Kathua Operation: Army Resorts to Speculative Firing, Helicopters, Drones, and Commandos Deployed in Manhunt



KATHUA, MAR 25: The anti-militancy operation in the Sanyal Hiranagar forest area of Kathua entered its third day on Tuesday, with joint forces yet to establish contact with the suspected militants believed to be hiding in the dense forest area.

Defense sources told the news agency Kashmir News Trust that soldiers engaging in the operation resorted to massive speculative firing but there was not response from the hiding militants.

They said that the joint operation—involving the army, commandos, sniffer dogs, drones, and unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs)—has been intensified to track down the militants.

An army helicopter was seen hovering over the area, providing aerial surveillance to assist the ground forces, sources added.

## G A Mir raises regularization of J&K's casual workers in Assembly

CS-led committee constituted to examine issue, says J&K Govt

■ HT News Network

SRINAGAR, MAR 25: In the ongoing budget session of the Jammu & Kashmir Legislative Assembly, Congress MLA Ghulam Ahmad Mir raised a question regarding the government's plans for regularising Daily Rated Workers (DRWs), CIC Operators, Rehbar-i-Janglat, Rehbar-i-Zirar, and casual labourers employed across various departments and corporations. Responding to the question, the Minister in Charge of



Finance, as per the news agency—stated that different departments have engaged these workers based on operational requirements and central government programme guidelines.

The government said that it has consistently adopted a pro-labour policy within the legal framework. The government in its reply further revealed that the General Administration Department (GAD) has issued a government order, framing a committee that has been tasked with examining issues related to the regularisation of casual and seasonal labourers, among others, in J&K. "General Administration Department vide G.O. No.

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## Fire destroys 21 houses, leaves 33 families homeless in Baramulla

■ HT News Network

BARAMULLA, MAR 25: Devastating blaze that engulfed a locality in old town Baramulla here in North Kashmir on Monday night damaged over 21 houses and left 33 families homeless.

Officials said that the fire broke out in a congested mohalla. Locals, Fire and Emergency Services personnel, J&K Policemen and others worked tirelessly to control the inferno.

After hours of relentless efforts, the fire was finally extinguished. No casualties were reported but property

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## Markets abuzz as Eid shopping frenzy grips Kashmir

■ HT News Network

SRINAGAR, MAR 24: With Eid-ul-Fitr just days away, a shopping frenzy has gripped Kashmir, with markets across the valley witnessing an overwhelming rush of customers.

From the streets of Lal Chowk in Srinagar to local markets in towns and villages, the festive spirit is evident as the people flock to buy clothes, footwear, sweets, and other essentials for the grand celebration.

As people prepare for one



of the most significant Islamic festivals, the shopkeepers are reporting record sales, especially in apparel, footwear, and traditional Kash-

miri delicacies. Tailors are struggling to keep up with the demand as people rush to get their Eid outfits stitched at the

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## J&K High Court Expresses Displeasure Over IAS Officer's Appointment Amid Arms Licences Scam

■ HT News Network

JAMMU, MAR 25, : The Jammu and Kashmir High Court has expressed strong displeasure over the appointment of an IAS officer facing prosecution in the Arms Licences Scam to a key government position. A Division Bench comprising Chief Justice Tashi Rabstan and Justice M.A. Chowdhary questioned the J&K administration for appointing M. Raju (IAS) as Commissioner/Secretary of the General Administration Department (GAD) despite the



CBI seeking prosecution sanction against him.

During the hearing, Advocate Sheikh Shakeel Ahmed, representing the petitioners, informed the court that the GAD had been sending incomplete prosecution proposals to the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) and Department of Personnel and Train-

ing (DoPT), Government of India, thereby delaying action against accused IAS officers. The Chief Justice, visibly upset, asked the government's counsel whether J&K lacked honest and upright officers for the post.

The CBI charge sheet includes the names of IAS officers Yasha Mudgal, Dr. Shahid Iqbal Choudhary, and Niraj Kumar, for whom prosecution sanction proposals were sent to MHA on December 27, 2024. However, MHA, in a report submitted on March 11, 2025, pointed out

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## CONTINUE FROM FRONT PAGE.....

### CM

on its pledges. "Whatever promises we have made in our manifesto, if we have the intent and commitment, we will fulfill them," he asserted. As a first step, the government has prioritized the poorest and most deserving households, ensuring that the initiative is rolled out systematically.

"We are not distorting facts—nor have we done so in the past, nor will we do so now. This process will take place systematically. Naturally, we will begin with those who are the poorest and most deserving. We are prioritizing the AAY category, but in the future, we will expand its scope. This is just the beginning," CM Abdullah stated.

Addressing concerns and skepticism regarding the initiative's feasibility, the Chief Minister urged critics to withhold judgment until the process officially begins.

"Some are quick to dismiss this initiative, saying it won't work—even before it has started. Let it begin first. Then, we will evaluate its progress. If it doesn't work, we will reassess. But our intention is clear: to provide electricity to the people," he remarked. Using a metaphor, he underscored the government's focus on delivering electricity to the people rather than engaging in political debates.

"Do we care more about milk or the cow? We care about the milk. It doesn't matter which cow produces it—our goal is to ensure people receive 200 units of electricity," he said.

Regarding the Amnesty Scheme, the Chief Minister stated that the government is considering modifications to improve its effectiveness.

"If we can establish a principle-based approach to these modifications, we will implement them," he assured.

Responding to opposition demands for a timeline, the CM said: "Some ask, 'Will you provide electricity, and if so, when?' The answer to such a question cannot be reduced to a single word. Because this is question number two. And the answer to question number two is not just a simple 'yes' or 'no.'"

He reaffirmed that the provision of 200 units of electricity will be carried out systematically and responsibly. "I have said this time and again, and I will say it again: this is the way we will do it," he reiterated.

Earlier, responding to clubbed questions from Dr. Narinder Singh Raina, Sajad Gani Lone, and Shabir Ahmad Kullay, the CM provided details on the implementation framework.

The government will provide 200 units of free electricity to all Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY) households under the PM Surya Ghar Muft Bijlee Yojna (PMSGBY). The initiative aims to reduce financial burdens and improve quality of life for economically weaker sections. The implementation will be carried out through the RESCO/Utility-Led Aggregation Model or another financially viable framework.

Regarding electricity tariffs, the CM clarified that consumers in J&K already receive heavily subsidized rates, especially in the domestic category.

The current tariff for domestic consumers ranges from Rs. 2.30 per unit (for up to 200 units per month) to Rs. 4.35 per unit, among the lowest in the country. For the Below Poverty Line (BPL) category, the rate is even lower—Rs. 1.40 per unit for up to 30 units per month.

Metered consumers are charged based on actual consumption, while unmetered consumers are billed on a flat-rate basis as per their sanctioned/agreed load. On the issue of waiving excessive electricity bills, the CM explained that unpaid bills over months or years result in arrears accumulation.

"To streamline billing and collection systems, the government has provided an opportunity to waive the interest/surcharge component on outstanding electricity arrears under the ongoing Amnesty Scheme," he said.

The government plans to extend the scheme with modifications, as announced, ensuring that consumers across all districts benefit. The government has also decided to adopt the RESCO model for installing Solar Roof Top Systems (SRTs) at the premises of AAY households, particularly in hilly areas. "This approach will enable local electricity generation, eliminating the costs associated with transmitting and distributing electricity from distant generators," the CM stated.

Additionally, the government will leverage subsidies provided under the PMSGBY. A survey of target beneficiaries is being initiated, and based on its findings, a financial framework will be developed for sustainable implementation.

### HM

to the news agency—wrote: "The unifying policies of the Modi government have tossed separatism out of J&K. Two organizations associated with the Hurriyat have announced the severing of all ties with separatism."

Terming rejection of separatism in Kashmir as a big victory for the government, Shah wrote: "I welcome this step towards strengthening Bharat's unity and urge all such groups to come forward and shed separatism once and for all.

It is a big victory for PM Shri @naren-

dramodi Ji's vision of building a developed, peaceful and unified Bharat."

Meanwhile, Leader of Opposition (LoP) in J&K Legislative Assembly, Sunil Sharma also welcomed the "historic move" of two Hurriyat associated groups snapping ties with separatism. "This is a testament of the unifying policies of PM Sh. @narendramodiji and Home Minister Sh. @AmitShah ji. Their leadership is paving the way for a stronger, unified Bharat. A big victory for peace and progress in J&K," LOP Sharma wrote on X—(KNO)

### PANCHAYAT BODIES

are being managed by administrative bodies instead of elected representatives, reads the response as per the news agency—The Ministry's data also indicates that in other states like Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, and Odisha, thousands of elected women sarpanches are leading local governance, while in J&K and Ladakh, the electoral process is yet to be completed.

The government has not yet provided a confirmed timeline for holding Panchayat elections in the two Union Territories—

### GAMIR

384 -JK(GAD) of 2025 dated 19.03.2025 has constituted a Committee headed by Chief Secretary J&K for examining the issues related to the regularization of casual, seasonal laborers, or other workers, etc. in the UT of J&K," the government said in its response. The government stated that wages for such workers are being paid as per established guidelines and terms of engagement. In the case of DRWs and casual laborers, wages are being disbursed in accordance with the Minimum Wages Act as notified by the government—

### HC

deficiencies in the proposals and asked J&K to furnish complete documents within a week. Meanwhile, the MHA has also sought prosecution sanction for M. Raju (IAS) and Prasanna Ramaswamy G (IAS) from the Lieutenant Governor of Ladakh.

Advocate Ahmed accused the J&K administration of shielding high-profile bureaucrats, arguing that while prosecution sanctions for JKAS officers were granted in 2021, leading to multiple charge sheets, efforts were being made to delay action against IAS officers.

Taking serious note of the delays, the Division Bench directed the J&K administration to file an Action Taken Report on the MHA's communication dated February 21, 2025, and asked the CBI to submit its latest status report before the next hearing.

The court has scheduled the final hearing of the case for April 24, 2025, and ordered both sides to complete their pleadings before that date. [KNT]

### EID

last minute. In Srinagar's Lal Chowk, Polo View, and Residency Road, the streets are packed with shoppers. Women and young girls are seen bargaining at clothing stores, while children excitedly pick out new outfits and toys. Men throng bakeries and confectionery shops, ensuring their homes are stocked with traditional sweets.

Local businessman, Bashir Ahmad, who owns a garment shop in Srinagar, told the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) that this year, the sales have been extraordinary. "After a few years of sluggish business due to economic downturns and political uncertainty, we are finally seeing a revival."

However, Ahmad was countered by Fayaz Malik, a footwear store owner in Srinagar, who said, "While footfall has increased, online shopping is eating into our sales every passing month. Many customers now browse products in stores but eventually buy them online at discounted rates, making it harder for traditional businesses to compete."

Meanwhile, the street vendors selling bangles, henna, and artificial jewelry are doing brisk business as young girls line up to adorn their hands with intricate mehendi designs.

The shopping fever is not just limited to Srinagar but is similar in other districts like Baramulla, Anantnag, and Pulwama where local markets are witnessing a huge rush.

However, amid the festive excitement, many shoppers are complaining about rising prices. The cost of clothes, footwear, and essential commodities has increased significantly, making it difficult for lower-income families to shop freely.

"Every year, prices go up before Eid. A simple dress that cost Rs 1,500 last year is now being sold for Rs 2,500. The government should regulate prices during festival seasons," said Shaista, a shopper in Srinagar.

Traders, however, blame inflation and transportation costs for the surge in prices.

The heavy rush has also led to massive traffic jams in many areas. Authorities have deployed additional traffic personnel to manage congestion, but the sheer volume of vehicles has made movement slow.

Meanwhile, security has been tightened across Kashmir, with additional personnel deployed in sensitive areas to ensure a peace-

ful celebration—

### FIRE

worth crores was destroyed, they said. Meanwhile, Deputy Commissioner (DC) Baramulla, along with Deputy Inspector General (DIG) of Police and Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Baramulla, visited the area and met the victims.

The DC announced an immediate relief of Rs 50,000 for the families whose houses were fully damaged and Rs 10,000 for those whose houses were partially damaged — the assistance was provided from the Red Cross as a temporary relief measure.

Additionally, the Deputy Commissioner stated that Rs 1.30 lakh to affected families will be sanctioned soon from the State Disaster Response Fund (SDRF) to aid in their rehabilitation.

"We are committed to supporting the victims of this unfortunate incident. Immediate assistance has been sanctioned, and further steps will be taken to ensure their rehabilitation," the DC assured.

The Deputy Commissioner, as per KNO, also directed the Executive Officer (EO) of the Municipal Council Baramulla to enroll the affected families under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY) for housing assistance.

Amid the tragedy, the role of local youth, civil society members, and traders was widely appreciated. Many volunteered in the firefighting efforts, offering help to fire and emergency personnel and assisting in the evacuation of residents.

"While the loss is heartbreaking, the unity and resilience displayed by the community are commendable. The timely intervention by the locals, along with the prompt response from the Fire and Emergency Services, prevented the fire from spreading further," a civil society representative said.

The civil society groups have urged the government to expedite the rehabilitation process and provide comprehensive assistance. Traders and locals have also called for compensation to support those who lost their livelihoods in the blaze—

### STATEHOOD

the current reality. Speaking in the Legislative Assembly, he highlighted the extensive efforts undertaken by his administration to press for statehood, including a cabinet resolution and direct appeals to the Prime Minister. Responding to opposition criticism regarding the use of "Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir" in the Appropriation Bills moved by his government, the Chief Minister dismissed misinformation being spread through social media and refuted claims that the bill would alter the region's status.

"This happens very frequently when we rely entirely on WhatsApp for information. The WhatsApp forward that my honourable colleague received—based on which a member also staged a brief walkout—is something we have all seen. This message attempts to create the false impression that if this bill is passed, Jammu and Kashmir will become a Union Territory," CM Omar Abdullah stated.

Clarifying the constitutional position, he asserted, "But the fact is, we are already a Union Territory—whether we like it or not. This is the government of the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir." The Chief Minister underscored that his government functions within the framework of the Union Territory.

"We have taken an oath as representatives of a Union Territory. We contested elections for the Union Territory Assembly. We are passing the budget of a Union Territory," he said.

Rejecting the opposition's objections over terminology in the Appropriation Bills, he questioned, "Now, if we pass this bill and refer to it as an amendment to the government of Jammu and Kashmir, what changes? If we pass the Appropriation Bill for the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir, what difference does it make? If I remove the term 'Union Territory,' will our status change? No, it will not."

He criticized performative politics, stating, "Performing for the cameras won't change our reality. What will bring change is our continued effort to restore Jammu and Kashmir's statehood. If there is anything outdated, it is probably the record of our efforts in this regard." Highlighting his government's push for statehood restoration, he said, "We held our first cabinet meeting, passed a resolution, and submitted it directly to the Hon'ble Prime Minister. When the Prime Minister recently visited Sonmarg, I stood before him and publicly called for the restoration of Jammu and Kashmir's statehood. Every time I visit Delhi, in every meeting, I reiterate that the people of Jammu and Kashmir do not accept the UT status."

Addressing legislative procedure, he pointed out, "However, the reality remains: we are a Union Territory. If we were not, things would have been different. If we were a state, the grants just passed would have been discussed in detail, and there would have been cut motions on them. But these were grants from the Home Department, and they were passed without discussion or cut motions—because we are a Union Territory." Taking a dig at

opposition tactics, CM Omar Abdullah remarked, "Staging a walkout for the cameras and claiming 'I am not part of this crime' does not change the fact that the crime has already been committed against us."

He cautioned against misinformation-driven politics, saying, "We must not allow WhatsApp forwards to dictate our politics. Our focus is clear: we want Jammu and Kashmir to be restored as a state. And, God willing, we will achieve that."

Concluding his statement, he reaffirmed, "However, simply removing or retaining the words 'Union Territory' does not change our reality. Jammu and Kashmir will remain a Union Territory until the Parliament of India restores its statehood. Therefore, let us not politicize this issue unnecessarily."

### SMC

He further said that the restoration of defunct street lights is carried by the concerned.

### GST

3 of 2025) were both introduced by Chief Minister, Omar Abdullah, who also holds the Finance portfolio. Both the bills were passed by voice vote following their presentation. Additionally, the Assembly passed the Jammu and Kashmir Goods and Services Tax (Amendment) Bill, 2025 (L.A. Bill No. 1 of 2025) through a voice vote. This bill, also introduced by the Chief Minister, aims to align the Union Territory's GST Act with recent amendments made to the Central Goods and Services Tax Act, 2017.

### SHARMA

The Minister was replying to a question raised by Shiekh Khurshed Ahmed. The Minister informed the House that out of the four projects, two have been completed and are functional while two projects are under process. He added that the sanctioned projects included construction of Rs 533.61 lakh Synthetic Hockey Turf at Pologround Srinagar and construction of Rs 539.78 lakh synthetic Hockey Turf at K.K. Hakku Stadium Jammu besides under construction synthetic Athletic Track at Tulibal Sopore, Baramulla and under construction Rs 294.11 lakh Indoor sports hall at Shalinar, Budgam. The Minister said that Khelo India scheme is a Centrally Sponsored Scheme of Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, Gol, and is not a constituency based scheme. He said that no project has been sanctioned under Khelo India scheme in Langate constituency for development of sports infrastructure. However, various play fields have been developed under Capex amounting Rs 191.25 lakh. These included Rs 85.02 lakh play field at Pandithpora langate, 23.13 lakh play field at Ashpora, Rs 11.96 lakh play field at Kutlari Mawer, Rs 12.00 lakh football ground at kulangam, Rs. 39.14 lakh Roll skating at Government Girls Higher Secondary School, Langate while Rs 20 lakh open Air Gym at kulangam is under execution.

### ASSEMBLY

tee on Estimates and Committee on Public Undertakings for the term ending March 31, 2026.

Each Committee will comprise eleven members, elected in accordance with Rules 344, 346 and 349 of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in the J&K Legislative Assembly.

### SAKEENA

CHC in the year 1999 with existing sanctioned staff strength. She added that, at present, against 03 sanctioned posts of Doctors, 02 are posted and against 21 Paramedic staff, 16 are posted at CHC Thanamandi. She informed that the issue regarding creation of posts shall be taken up with the Finance Department.

The Minister further informed the house that in various health institutions of medical blocks Darhal and Manjkote like CHC Darhal, PHC Lah, PHC Thanamandi, PHC Shahdhara Sharief, PHC Manjakote, PHC Ghambir Mughlan, PHC Kallar Chatyar and PHC Bagla Ndyala, against 35 sanctioned posts, 19 are in position and 16 are vacant. She also informed that under NHM, against six sanctioned posts, five are vacant. The Minister further said that the common masses, seeking medical attention, are also being facilitated through rationalization and developing a robust e-sanjeevani/tele-medicine through a well designed hub and spoke model.

### DYCM

of Kashmiri Migrants to Kashmir Valley amounting Rs.1618.40 crore in the year 2009. He said that housing, transit accommodation, continuation of cash relief to migrants, student scholarships, employment, assistance to Horticulturalists and Agriculturalists and waiver of interest on loans are among the components being covered under the package.

He said that construction of 6000 transit accommodations was sanctioned in different districts of Kashmir Valley during December

2015 and work on 5160 flats have been taken up for construction. Of this, 3120 flats have been completed up to ending January, 2025 while the remaining 2040 flats are still under construction. Moreover, the remaining 840 flats are likely to be taken-up shortly.

The Deputy Chief Minister said that the matter of enhancement in relief benefits has been taken up with the Government of India for consideration of enhancement/grant of full relief benefits in favour of new born babies of Kashmiri Migrants from Rs. 400 per month to Rs. 3250 per month without disturbing the ceiling of Rs. 13000 per family per month.

He maintained that the ex-gratia compensation for the damaged properties due to bomb blast/fire incidents of migrants is being disbursed as per assessment made by the R&B department and the concerned Tehsildars. However, there is no such order regarding settlement of unpaid balance of ex-gratia in addition to Rs. 1.00 lakh already paid at the time of sanction of such compensation.

With regard to reallocation of posts, the Deputy Chief Minister said that, pursuant to Cabinet Decision 3000, supernumerary posts were created in second tranche in addition to 3000 posts created in the year 2009 (First Tranche) and referred to recruitment agencies. He said that the progress with respect to filling up of these posts was reviewed in the year 2020 and it was found that 1997 posts were still unfilled and were withdrawn from different departments. Consequent upon withdrawal, the same number of posts were re-allocated to four departments viz. Finance, Agriculture Production, Food, Civil Supplies & Consumer Affairs and Revenue, he added.

He added that the posts of Junior Assistants, Legal Stenographers, Junior Engineers and Draftsman (Civil/ Mechanical) were among the 1997 withdrawn posts.

The Deputy Chief Minister said that the government has not constituted any Shrines and Temples Management Committee. However, constant security vigil is being kept on the Shrines and Temples to ensure protection of these places. Any violation to religious properties is taken cognizance of by the competent authority with timely action for eviction, custody and restoration of such properties and also action under law against the violators.

Dr Narinder Singh Raina, Bashir Ahmad Veeri, Altaf Ahmad Wani, Showkat Ahmad Ganie, Hasnain Masoodi, Mir Saifullah, Kuldeep Raj Dubey, Balwant Singh Mankotia, R S Pathania raised the supplementary.

## DC Kulgam chairs DLRC/ DCC meeting, reviews performances of Banks, line departments

■ **Farooq Rather**



KULGAM, MARCH 25: District Development Commissioner (DDC) Kulgam, Athar Aamir Khan today chaired the District Level Review Committee Meeting/District Consultative Committee (DLRC/DCC) in order to review the performance of Banks and line departments for quarter ending December 31, 2024 under Annual credit Plan and Govt Schemes. The Meeting was attended by ACR, RBI, NAB-ARD, and District Officers of line departments besides District Coordinators of various banks. LDM, Iftikhar Ah Padder informed the meeting that deposits of Banks stand at Rs.2753.01 crores as on 31.12.2024 witnessing growth of 12.20% over December 2023, while Advances stand at Rs.2278.57cr as on 31.12.2024 witnessing growth of 5.38% over December 2023. The Credit Deposit Ratio of District Kulgam stood at 82.77%, quite above the National BenchMark of 60%.

Under District Annual Credit Plan (2024-25) of Rs.1937.00 Cr, Banks have disbursed Rs.1264.45 Cr to 46322 beneficiaries during quarter Q3 ended December 31, 2024 thus achieving 65% of ACP target.

DDC while reviewing sector wise achievements instructed Banks to improve credit dispensations in Agriculture, MSME, and more focus should be given to Farm Mechanization, Education, Housing and Renewable Energy sectors.

It was informed by the LDM that the district has achieved the targets of PMEGP, Artisans/Weavers Credit Card & PM Weavers Mudra Scheme.

The district has disbursed 325 vehicles till date under Mumkin Scheme, 30 Tejaswini cases and 56 cases disbursed under Spurring till date. Kulgam district is leading in UT of J&K, he added.





# DC Srinagar visits Hazratbal; takes onsite review of arrangements for upcoming religious festivals

HT News Network

SRINAGAR, MARCH 25: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Srinagar, Dr. Bilal Mohi-Ud-Din Bhat today undertook a visit to Hazratbal Shrine in order to take onsite review of the arrangements being made by all line Departments for smooth conduct of the upcoming auspicious religious occasions of Shab-e-Qadr, Jumat ul vida, Eid-ul-Fitr at the Shrine.

The DC was accompanied by Additional Deputy Commissioner, Dr. Khalid Hussain Malik; SP Hazratbal, SP Traffic, Superintending Engineer R&B, Tehsildar Eidgah, Tehsildar North and other senior Officers of line Departments, besides Administrator of J&K Wakf Board and senior members of Hazratbal Shrine Management.

On the occasion, DC took a detailed appraisal of the action plan from concerned Departments regarding the arrangements put in place for observance



of auspicious occasions of Shab-e-Qadr, Jumat ul vida and Eid-ul-Fitr. He passed the directions to concerned Departments related to ensuring supply

of water and electricity, cleanliness measures, dog menace, fire service, transport, parking and medical facilities etc. The measures to tackle any kind of inconvenience caused by inclement weather conditions were also discussed.

The DC directed the Officers of all line departments to ensure special arrangements for smooth observance of the pious religious occasions at the Shrine for the devotees particularly during the intervening night (Shab-e-Qadr) 26-27th Ramzan-ul Mubarak 1446 Hijri, which falls on intervening night of 27-28 March, 2025 and on Jumat ul vida i.e March 28, 2025 besides on the auspicious occasion of Eid-ul-Fitr during which large religious congregations are expected.

During the visit, the DC was apprised by the Administrator, J&K Wakf Board about the arrangements being made by the Wakf for smooth observance of the holy religious occasions during which about one lakh devotees are expected to visit the Hazratbal Shrine to offer special prayers during intervening night (Shab-e-Qadr), congregational prayer on Jumat ul vida and of Eid-ul-fitr.

## DC Srinagar chairs DLRC/ DCC meet; reviews performance of Banks in implementing Govt. schemes

HT News Network

SRINAGAR, MARCH 25: A meeting of District Level Review Committee/District Consultative Committee (DLRC/DCC) was today held under the chairmanship of Deputy Commissioner (DC) Srinagar, Dr. Bilal Mohi-Ud-Din Bhat at Meeting Hall of the DC Office Complex, here to review the performance of the Banks and sponsoring Departments under various Government initiatives and flagship schemes for Quarter ending December 2024. At the outset, the Deputy Commissioner/Chairman DLRC/DCC took a detailed review and sector wise performance of the Banks in implementation of different Government schemes. He also reviewed the achievements of Banks in lending to Priority/Non Priority sectors under Annual Credit Plan. Addressing the meeting, the DC urged Banks and sponsoring agencies to prioritize achieving targets under Priority Sector Lending. He also impressed upon the banks to improve the ease of availing banking facilities to the unemployed youth who genuinely need it for achieving the gainful employment through various credit facilities tailored in accordance to their entrepreneurial aspirations. The DC emphasized utmost coordination between Banks and sponsoring agencies for better implementation of self-employment schemes so that beneficiaries set up their income generating units in a seamless manner. He stressed on all the line Departments and Banks operating in the District to ensure proper hand holding of the beneficiaries to further improve the credit facilities.

## SED receives demands for up-gradation from various schools of Budgam district: Sakeena Itoo

HT News Network

Jammu:- Minister for Education, Sakeena Itoo, today said that the School Education Department (SED) has received demands for up-gradation of various schools of Budgam district.

These schools included Middle School Mazahama, Girls Middle School Kanihama, Middle School Rassu and Middle School Charangam, S.K Pora, Rathson and Aripathan.

The Minister said this while replying to a question raised by Dr. Shafi Ahmad Wani.

The Minister informed the house that the department has no immediate



proposal for up-gradation of schools as numbers of these institutions have already been upgraded. She added that the department is presently

focusing on creation of required infrastructure and providing staff to all schools, especially the upgraded ones. The Minister also informed that up-gradation of schools involves huge financial implications for creation of infrastructure and posts of teaching staff. She added that the Education Department faces shortage of teaching staff as no recruitment of teachers could be made for the past five years due to freezing of posts of General Line Teachers (GLTs) by the State Administrative Council (SAC) decision of 2018. The Minister further said that as and when the department proposes up-gradation of schools, the said schools of Budgam district shall be considered.

## MD JJM for expediting source sustainability reports under Jal Jeevan Mission

HT News Network

SRINAGAR, MARCH 25: Mission Director (MD), Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM), J&K, Khurshid Ahmad Shah today convened an internal meeting of Mission Directorate, Jal Jeevan Mission in the UT of J&K. The meeting was attended by the Consultants, Project Managers, Chief Chemists, Technical officers and other staff of Mission Directorate, JJM, J&K. The MD enquired about the field visits undertaken by the consultants and asked for their feedback about technical feasibility and source sustainability reports entrusted to them in various districts of J&K. The chair was informed that most of the reports stand submitted however some reports are pending owing to snow bound far flung areas in Kashmir and hilly inaccessible areas in the Jammu Division.

MD directed the consultants to complete the whole process in the first half of April. He also enjoined upon the consultants and project managers to conduct the survey of left out areas for which pre-feasibility reports are awaited from field divisions.

# Drive against sale of counterfeit products intensified by Handicrafts & Handloom Dept Warns of strict action against violators

HT News Network

SRINAGAR, MARCH 25 – With tourist inflow increasing following the advent of summer season, the Handicrafts and Handloom Department, Kashmir, has upped the ante in its fight against sale of unlabeled counterfeit products sold in the name of genuine hand-made products in Kashmir. The Quality Control Division of the Department conducted several inspections of craft showrooms in City Centre here, advising dealers to desist from selling machine-made items in the garb of genuine handmade products.

In an official press release issued here today, Deputy Director, Quality Control, Mirza Shahid Ali, said the Department will further intensify its ongoing drives and ensure that buyers and tourists are sold certified hand-made products in various sale outlets in the capital city and



routes leading to famous tourist destinations of Gulmarg, Pahalgam and Sonamarg,

that attract a heavy footfall. "Inspection Squads have been placed on duty to regularly check sale and purchase of genuine hand-made products," he added.

He further stated that Government shall exercise zero-tolerance towards sale of counterfeit products in the name of Kashmir Handicrafts and anyone found misbranding notified products would be dealt under the Quality Control Act that includes stiff penalties and cancellation of registration," he added. An advisory has already been issued impressing upon tourists and buyers to approach the Department in case they feel they have been duped and sold counterfeit products. The Department has also urged business stakeholders to get their hand-made products tested and certified at Pashmina Testing & Quality Certification Centre, CDI and IICT lab, to ensure customer satisfaction and safeguarding the rich heritage of Kashmir.

Budget Session 2025  
Question Hour in LA

## International Cricket Stadium is not a project of JK Govt: Omar Abdullah

HT News Network

JAMMU, MARCH 25: Chief Minister, Omar Abdullah, today clarified that the proposed International Cricket Stadium at Bajalta in Jammu was not a project initiated by the Jammu and Kashmir government. "The proposal for the cricket stadium was initiated by the Jammu & Kashmir Cricket Association (JKCA) but did not materialize. It was not a project of J&K government," Chief Minister said while intervening during the Question Hour in the Legislative Assembly. Earlier, replying to the main question raised by Sham Lal Sharma, Minister for Youth Services and Sports, Satish Sharma, said that there was no such proposal by the Youth Services & Sports Department for establishment of International Cricket Stadium at Bajalta in Jammu. The Minister informed the House that playfields are available in various schools in Jammu East Constituency wherein sports activities are being carried throughout the year by the staff of Youth Services & Sports Department. These schools included GGHSS Mubarakh Mandi, SRML Parade, GHSS Center Basis, GHSS Hari Singh, GHSS Julakha Mohalla, GHS City Chowk, HSS Khana Chargal, HS Bain Bajalta and HS Chak Largen.

## J&K Land Revenue Act-1996 prevents use of agricultural land for non-agricultural purposes: CM

HT News Network

JAMMU, MARCH 25: Chief Minister, Omar Abdullah today said that the provisions for preventing the misuse of agricultural land are provided in the Jammu and Kashmir Land Revenue Act, Svt. 1996. The Chief Minister was replying to a question raised by Irfan Hafiz Lone in the Legislative Assembly. He said that under Section 133-A of this Act, no land used for agricultural purposes shall be used for any non-agricultural purposes except with the permission of District Collector. Further, as per section 133-A of Land Revenue Act, SVT. 1996 agriculture land upto 400 sq meters can be converted for residential purposes.

The Chief Minister said that under Section 133-C, of the Act, any land converted for other purposes in violation of the provision of Section 133-A or Section 133-B or 133-BB shall escheat to the Government and there is punishment for such offences who have contravened the provisions of Section 133-A or Section 133-B or 133-BB and shall be punishable by the Collector or any Officer not below the rank of an Assistant Collector of 1st Class upto Twenty Five Thousand Rupees.

He informed the House, that the Board of Revenue has notified detailed regulations, prescribed forms and fixed fee for conversion of agriculture land to non-agricultural purpose which also has monitoring provisions.

Adding, the Chief Minister said that Jammu and Kashmir Land Grant Act provides for grant of state land on lease by the Government. The Jammu and Kashmir Land Grant Rules, 2022 have been revised and notified vide S.O 668, dated 09.12.2022.

## CM Omar Abdullah assures House on infrastructure development for administrative units created in his tenure

HT News Network

JAMMU, MARCH 25: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah today assured the House that his government remains committed to the development of administrative units created under his previous tenure and will ensure the necessary infrastructure is built over time.

Replying to a supplementary question from MLA G.A. Mir, the Chief Minister stated that the construction of the Mini Secretariat Dooru was initiated in 2018 by JKPC at an estimated cost of Rs. 590 lakh. He informed the House that work has been completed up to the plinth level, and part payments have been made accordingly.

However, a Detailed Project Report (DPR) amounting to Rs. 598.91 lakh was prepared by PWD, but the required Administrative Approval (AA) and Technical Sanction (TS) have not been accorded. "Out of the total estimated cost of Rs. 590 lakh, an amount of Rs. 25 lakh was released under the District Budget 2017-18, which has been utilized against the total work done claims of Rs. 39 lakh. The work has been completed up to the plinth level," the Chief Minister said. He further stated that a revised DPR of Rs. 598.91 lakh was prepared by PWD in 2021, but it requires reassessment in line with the latest Schedule of Rates (SoRs), considering the impact of cost escalation. A final decision will be taken once this reassessment is completed. He further stated that a revised DPR of Rs. 598.91 lakh was prepared by PWD in 2021, but it requires reassessment in line with the latest Schedule of Rates (SoRs), considering the impact of cost escalation.



EDITORIAL

Mass Communication & Journalism professionals need support from govt

PUBLIC RELATIONS is an important subject of Mass Communication & Journalism courses being taught in the different universities and colleges of the country. The basic aim of this subject is to acquaint the students with the latest trends of the overall field of public relations. It is also done so that they deliver to the best possible level as and when they are asked to do so by a corporate house, government department or any undertaking.

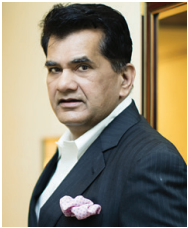
It is quite unfortunate that the concept of public relations has not been understood by most of the people in Kashmir. It is due to this reason that the people who receive education in this field are kept at bay as and when any organization needs the services of a public relations officer or public relations specialist. Instead of appointing Mass Communication pass-outs the people at helm appoint youth who have got degrees in some other subjects. This has squeezed the job options for the Mass Communication professionals and they are at the receiving end.

In the other parts of the world the Mass Communication professionals have not to run after the jobs since there are many options available to them. Getting appointed as a public relations officer or public relations specialist is seen as a good option by the youth who received education in the subject of Mass Communication & Journalism. The public relations expert gives a new dimension to the functioning of a government department, corporate house or any other organization.

There is a general notion among the people that a person who has a degree in the subject of Mass Communication & Journalism can become a journalist only. This notion needs to be removed since there are many other job options for a Mass Communication & Journalism pass-out. But for this the people more so those who are decision makers in the government and private sectors need to be aware about the developments taking place on the ground.

These people should appoint the Mass Communication & Journalism professionals to the positions of public relations officers or public relations specialists. Once this happens then such professionals would understand that sky's the limit for them and they need not to be worried about their future. As on date the Mass Communication & Journalism professionals feel that they have been pushed to the wall since not many jobs are available to them in the field of Journalism and allied fields.

Navigating the geopolitical trends reshaping our world



AMITABH KANT

The Second Trump Administration is doubling down on tariffs and 'Make America Great Again' policies. The Trump Administration is also redefining and rewriting alliances of the past, with reverberations being felt by their allies in Europe and Asia. These moves aim to strengthen the US economy by improving trade balance and reducing public spending. At the same time, the United States has withdrawn from the Paris Agreement, the World Health Organisation (WHO), and earlier, it had withdrawn from the International Court of Justice (ICJ). These moves are creating a vacuum in the global geopolitical order. This vacuum will not remain for long - it will be filled by competing powers. While the U.S. remains the most powerful actor, we are seeing the rise of a multipolar world once again. Fragmenting globalisation, the battle for technological supremacy, the geopolitics of energy, and collapsing global governance are the key geopolitical trends reshaping our world that India must navigate.

Fragmenting Globalisation

The era of globalisation we have seen in the post-World War II era is coming to an end as we know it. Since the global financial crisis, we have seen fragmented globalisation. Trade wars accelerated this fragmentation. The COVID-19 pandemic saw a massive disruption in global supply chains, prompting countries and businesses to build alternative supply

chains. With the Trump Administration again pursuing tariffs, the second era of trade wars is upon us. Whether reciprocal or across-the-board tariffs, the trade wars will disrupt world trade immensely. Trade wars are no longer just about merchandise. They impact factors such as technology, energy, and industrial policy. Countries are increasingly resorting to protectionism and building capabilities in strategic industries to ensure energy and national security. With the World Trade Organisation (WTO) in limbo, countries are increasingly turning to bilateral or plurilateral trade agreements. The rise of friend-shoring and the goal of building alternative supply chains presents opportunities for India. We can attract manufacturing investments with the right policies, strategic bilateral trade deals, and a focus on ease of doing business.

Technology: The Battleground for Global Power

Technology has been the key driving force shaping global power dynamics from the First Industrial Revolution to the Fourth. In today's era, semiconductors, artificial intelligence (AI), and emerging technologies are the key drivers. Nations are pouring billions into chip manufacturing to ensure technological sovereignty. AI is seeing massive investments from countries and companies alike. At the same time, the risks posed by cyberwarfare and AI cannot be overlooked. Cyber warfare can disrupt entire energy grids or bring down payments and banking systems. AI-driven misinformation campaigns can disrupt elections and sow social discord. AI should be shaped, owned, and deployed by communities worldwide. We must innovate efficiently, do more with less, champion open source and ingenious engineering, and create multilingual and multimodal models. The global commu-

nity must ensure that technology is inclusive while limiting harm. The India model, where technology is used to bridge divides, rather than widen them, can be a template for the world.

The Geopolitics of Energy and the Energy Transition

The shift toward clean energy is redefining power dynamics. Nations rich in critical minerals (lithium, cobalt, rare earths) or those that control the processing of these critical minerals are becoming more influential. Today, about 70-80% of rare earth elements (REE) extraction and processing is controlled by China. 80% of the world's solar cells are produced by China, and so are - 70% of electric vehicle batteries. With China already ahead of the technological curve, the US, under the Trump Administration, has withdrawn from the Paris Agreement and has instead focused on fossil fuel expansion. This poses enormous risks for the global energy transition. Developed nations have already consumed 80% of the global carbon budget, and coal phase-out from G7 countries will now happen by 2035 instead of 2030. Further, developed nations are failing in their responsibility to provide climate finance and technology to the developing world. This leaves little room for developing countries to meet their development ambitions. Our race towards clean energy requires new forms of global alliances. Countries must collaborate on technology, such as next-generation solar panels, electrolyzers, and alternate cell chemistry (ACC) batteries. India must act decisively, continuing to build our domestic ecosystem in green hydrogen, solar energy, and electric mobility. We must also secure trade partnerships to ensure access to critical minerals while developing capabilities for processing and refining.

Collapsing Global Governance Amidst Rising Global Conflict

At a time when global cooperation is most required, the structures we have in place are failing in their mandate. The United Nations is struggling to maintain relevance. Global temperatures have already crossed the 1.5-degree Celsius mark. The Global South remains on the sidelines both in terms of its representation and its priorities. The UN Security Council remains gridlocked, the WTO lacks a functioning dispute resolution mechanism, and COP29 failed to deliver much-needed climate finance. From Ukraine to Gaza to Sudan, conflict is escalating worldwide. As PM Modi has stated repeatedly, today's challenges of climate change, pandemics, and financial instability see no national borders. He has emphasised that we cannot fight the challenges of the 21st century with outdated institutions. A new global governance framework is needed that places the Global South at its core and recognises that the world is no longer the domain of a select few powers. This is a moment of opportunity for India—to shape an alternative global economic model and advocate for a more inclusive international system.

The coming decade will shape the future of global politics and economics. India is emerging and positioning itself as a pragmatic leader on the global stage. We are bringing to the fore issues of importance to the Global South whilst striking a conciliatory note on global conflict. The Prime Minister's recent statement that we must emphasise dialogue instead of discord has struck a chord globally. India's diplomatic balancing act is becoming a defining feature of this era.

The author is India's G20 Sherpa, and former CEO of NITI Aayog. Views expressed are personal.

Pension battle: Employees' right or government burden?



DR. SATYAWAN SAURABH

Restoration of the Old Pension Scheme (OPS) has become an important social and economic issue in India. It is not only a matter of concern for government employees but also for the country's financial policy and social security. In 2004, the Old Pension Scheme was abolished and the New Pension Scheme (NPS) was implemented, but in the last few years, there has been a widespread movement and political debate among employees regarding the restoration of OPS.

What was the Old Pension Scheme (OPS)?

Imagine getting a fixed income every month even after your job is over, like a magical treasure that never gets empty! This was OPS—a defined benefit pension scheme in which government employees received 50% of their last salary as pension after retirement. Dearness Allowance (DA) was also added to this, due to which the pension kept increasing from time to time. Under this scheme, the government gave a full guarantee of pension, and the employee did not have to make any contribution.

New Pension Scheme (NPS) and Controversy

In 2004, the central government abolished OPS and implemented NPS, which is a defined contribution scheme. In this, employees have to invest a certain part of their salary in

In India, before 2004, government employees were given pensions under the Old Pension Scheme (OPS). Under this, a fixed pension was given for life after retirement. 50% of the last salary was given as a pension.

a pension fund, which has to depend on market-based returns. Now imagine that your pension is floating on the waves of the stock market—sometimes up, sometimes down! This is the reason why there is a feeling of insecurity among employees about NPS, because there is no guaranteed pension in it.

Why is the demand for OPS restoration increasing?

Financial insecurity: The pension amount in NPS depends on the market performance, which does not provide permanent and fixed income to retired employees. The pension in OPS used to increase with the dearness allowance, whereas NPS does not have this benefit. States like Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh, Punjab, Jharkhand, and Himachal Pradesh have announced the implementation of OPS. Lakhs of government employees are on strike and protesting, increasing the pressure on the government. OPS is considered an essential means for financial stability in old age. Many retired employees under NPS are struggling to meet their expenses.

International perspective: pension systems in other countries

Different models have been adopted for the pension system in many countries of the world. Some countries have continued schemes like OPS for government employees, while other countries have adopted a private investment-based system. Under the Social Security System

in the US, government and private employees get a fixed pension after retirement. However, government contribution is limited in this, and personal investment is also necessary. A state pension scheme is in place in Britain, in which the government ensures a minimum pension, but private schemes are encouraged for additional pension.

Germany has a strong public pension system, where both employees and employers make mandatory contributions, resulting in a guaranteed pension. France also has a defined benefit pension system, where the government plays a major role and employees are provided with a permanent pension.

A superannuation fund system is in place here, in which both the employee and the employer make regular investments, and after retirement this amount is given in the form of a pension.

Why do MPs and MLAs get pensions?

An important question also arises: if the pension of government employees has been abolished, then why are MPs and MLAs still given pensions? Do MPs and MLAs take policy decisions during their tenure, for which they get special privileges? In many states, MLAs get lifelong pensions after one term, which is different from the rules for general government employees. Many former MPs and MLAs have already been working in government services, and they get double pensions. Many employee organizations argue that when the

pension of government employees has been abolished, then public representatives should also be kept in the same category. The burden of pension of MPs and MLAs on the government treasury is increasing, due to which the demand for abolishing it is increasing.

Potential benefits, financial impact, and challenges of OPS restoration

Restoration of OPS may increase the government's financial burden. The government will have to allocate a large part of its budget for pension payments, which may affect other development schemes. Some economists believe that implementing OPS may lead to long-term economic imbalances. A permanent pension scheme will provide security to employees, and they will be assured about their future. People's inclination towards government jobs will increase, due to which qualified and talented people will join the administrative services. When retired employees get assured income, they will maintain their purchasing power, which will maintain stability in the market. OPS gives employees an opportunity to live with dignity in old age.

conclusion

Restoration of old pensions is not just an employee welfare policy but a broader social and economic issue. The government has to adopt a balanced approach and formulate a policy that ensures the economic security of employees and, at the same time, maintains the financial balance of the government. The future of OPS restoration will depend on how the government resolves this issue and whether a middle path is possible.

Poet, freelance journalist and columnist, radio and TV panelist



# World Theatre Day and it's Importance



BY:GULFAM BARJI  
HARWAN SRINAGAR.

On March 27 the International Day of theatre is celebrated all over the world. The World Theatre Day of celebrates the importance and utility of the arts because the theatre gives us the opportunity to reflect the bitter experiences of life, teach and change. This day highlights the essence, beauty and importance of theatre arts, their important role in entertainment and the symbolic effects on the theater life. The day also informs governments, politicians, institutions and stakeholders around the world who have not yet understood the importance, usefulness of theatre for the people and the possibility of its economic

development. After the start of the year 1962, the World Theatre Day continues to be celebrated. This day highlights the importance of theatre arts. Theatre is a common form of performance art that uses directly actors. The actor can reach the audience through the combination of gestures, speeches, songs, music and dance to present the experience of a real or imaginary event directly to the audience. The use of art element such as colorful scenes and stage craft, such as lighting, is done to enhance physicality, a sense of presence and the immediateness of the experience. The modern theatre includes plays and musical theatre. The arts of the ballet and opera are also theatre's, and in addition to the theatre many conventions such as acting, costumes and staging are called theatre. The musical theatre is a separate identity that helps to effectively use the theatre to develop it. The importance of the theatre arts and their important role in entertainment is celebrated to raise and highlight how they can be used for peace and economic development. Every year on March 27, a theme is followed by the the-



atre and the ITI determines the theme every year and it identifies the role of the theatre in establishing peace and combining cultures. The theme has been translated into many languages so that everyone can understand and practice it. World Theatre Day 2025 Theme To do this, every year on March 27 a theme is followed for the past 59 years. The theme for World Theatre Day 2025 is "Theatre and a Culture of Peace."ITI doesn't designate any specific theme for

World Theatre Day every year.26 Feb 2025. Events are held around the world at ITI centers and designated places every year on March 27, and ITI encourages everyone who celebrate this day to use its creativity to promote it. This World Day of the theatre is the purpose of promoting the theatre in all forms to inform people of the theatre's value, enable theatre communities to promote their work on a large scale enjoy the theatre in all forms and share the theatre

with others. International Day of theatre gives us the opportunity to celebrate and appreciate their importance. Theatre is not just a way to entertain ourselves but the theatre gives us something new. We must never forget how special and beautiful the theatre is to us. Theatre is a bridge between the people and the authorities. Theatre shows also show a glimpse of a variety of people and their lives. Theatre allows you to step into someone else's shoes and see

life from their point of view. This teaches young people with sympathy and cultural relationships. Theatre collects people because it is a mutual art and you learn to be a community worker. Theatre helps you tell you the stories of your life and the lives of others. It helps you create meaning through personal narratives. Many forms of theatre have been alive for centuries while some have become new for some time and some are more popular than others. One of the aims of the theatre is to make people aware of its value and beauty in all forms of theatre. This is why the international theatre community is planned every year to promote the ancient art of drama and music. The theatre is not just a matter of entertaining ourselves but it is a way to learn something new that we may never find to learn in life. It does not matter how many powers we have entertained. We should never forget how special and beautiful we should be appreciated. Finally I am deeply congratulated to the theatre lover's and theatre guards around the world on the occasion of the World Theatre Day.

## The importance of Mother Tongue



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Language is more than just a tool for communication; it is the foundation of our thoughts, emotions, and identity. Among the many languages a person may learn, the mother tongue holds a special place. It is the first language we are exposed to—the language of our parents—and the language that shapes our earliest understanding of the world. The importance of the mother tongue cannot be overstated, as it plays a crucial role in personal development, cultural preservation, and social cohesion.

### Foundation of Cognitive Development

The mother tongue is the first language a child learns, forming the basis for cognitive development. Research shows that children taught in their mother tongue during their early years perform better academically. This is because they can grasp complex concepts more easily when explained in a language they are familiar with. The mother tongue acts as a bridge to learning other languages and subjects, enabling children to build a strong educational foundation.

### Cultural Identity and Heritage

Language is deeply intertwined with culture. The mother tongue carries the traditions, values, and history of a community. It is through this language that stories, songs, and rituals are passed down from one generation to the next. Losing one's mother tongue can lead to a loss of cultural identity, disconnecting individuals from their roots. Preserving the mother tongue is essential for maintaining cultural diversity and ensuring that future generations remain connected to their heritage.

### Emotional and Psychological Well-Being

The mother tongue is often the language of the heart—the language in which we express our deepest emotions, thoughts, and feelings. Speaking in one's mother tongue can provide a sense of comfort and belonging, especially in unfamiliar or challenging situations. For individuals living in foreign countries or multicultural environments,

the mother tongue serves as a link to their homeland and a source of emotional support.

### Social Cohesion and Communication

In multilingual societies, the mother tongue plays a vital role in fostering social cohesion. It allows individuals to communicate effectively within their communities, strengthening bonds and promoting mutual understanding. When people can speak their mother tongue freely, it creates a sense of inclusivity and respect for diversity. This, in turn, contributes to a more harmonious and united society.

### Economic and Professional Advantages

While global languages like English are often emphasized for professional success, the mother tongue also holds significant economic value. In many regions, businesses and industries operate primarily in the local language. Proficiency in the mother tongue can open doors to job opportunities and enable individuals to engage more effectively with their local communities. Additionally, preserving indigenous languages can boost tourism and cultural industries, contributing to economic growth.

### Preserving Linguistic Diversity

The world is home to thousands of languages, but many are at risk of extinction. According to UNESCO, a language disappears every two weeks, taking with it a unique cultural and intellectual heritage. By valuing and promoting the use of mother tongues, we can help preserve linguistic diversity and ensure that no language is lost to history.

### Conclusion

The mother tongue is more than just a means of communication; it is a vital part of who we are. It shapes our thinking, connects us to our culture, and provides a sense of belonging. In a rapidly globalizing world, it is crucial to recognize the importance of mother tongues and take steps to preserve and promote them. By doing so, we not only enrich our own lives but also contribute to the cultural and linguistic diversity that makes our world so vibrant and unique.

## The Miseries of Low-Paid Workers: Time to Uplift the Working Class

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Every day, social media sites, blogs, newspapers, and television channels are filled with stories about empowering low-wage workers in the Indian industry. We have designated days like Labor Day and Women's Empowerment Day to celebrate their contributions, but beyond grand speeches and showy gestures, we do little for their betterment. Many fail to realize how badly low-wage workers suffer, how their families survive, and how their struggles are often ignored.

Many nations commemorate these days to promote justice, equality, and fairness for laborers and the working class. Discussions on workers' rights persist, with many still facing unsafe working conditions and inadequate recognition. While it is good that we celebrate their contributions on selected days, we must also highlight their social status, their role in society, and how they are treated. These celebrations should not just be symbolic; they should serve as opportunities to show genuine appreciation for workers in industrial and allied sectors while also advocating for better working conditions and worker rights.

### The Need for Legal Reforms

In the modern era, these observances should focus on social justice for low-paid workers. Political parties and lawmakers must take concrete steps to improve their situation. Some key areas that require immediate attention include:

#### Laws to Protect Low-Paid Workers

Legislation should be enacted to ensure job security and fair wages for low-paid workers. The law should act as a backbone for them, protecting their rights so they are not harassed for payment or fired for raising their voices against injustices. If they work tirelessly, their efforts should be recognized and adequately compensated.



#### Holidays and Weekend Celebrations

After long hours of hard work, low-paid workers deserve adequate rest. They should be given weekly holidays, especially Sundays and designated week-offs, to spend time with their families, relax, and enjoy a balanced personal life.

#### Financial Security in Old Age

When these workers grow old, they should have enough savings to live with dignity. They should not have to beg for small amounts to survive. Employers and the government must ensure that they have sufficient financial reserves or pension plans to rely on for the rest of their lives.

#### Healthcare Benefits

Workers should be entitled to health benefits so that if they fall sick while working, they receive medical support without salary deductions. Their financial stability should not suffer during illnesses.

#### Safeguarding Children

Strict laws should prevent child labor and ensure that children of low-paid workers attend school instead of working. Education should be a priority so that the next

generation does not inherit the same struggles.

#### Workplace Safety

Labor laws should enforce strict safety regulations, ensuring that no worker is allowed to work without proper safety equipment. Whether the job is physically demanding or not, adequate safety measures should be in place to prevent workplace injuries.

#### Workers' Unions

Workers should have the right to form unions to collectively address workplace concerns. These unions should advocate for better wages, job security, and improved working conditions by negotiating with employers.

#### Ending Workplace Discrimination

Workers should be treated with dignity and respect, regardless of their caste, religion, or background. Their contributions should be acknowledged without bias or prejudice.

#### Challenges Faced by Indian Workers and Their Families

Indian workers often work in difficult conditions, particularly in factories where basic amenities like hospitals, proper nutrition, and

education for their families are lacking. Safety measures are inadequate, and many workers endure long hours with little pay, leaving them with no time for their families.

Due to job scarcity, many workers fear that if they speak up against exploitation, they could lose their only source of income. This silences their struggles and forces them to accept unfair treatment. The situation could improve if workers were paid fairly, treated with respect, and given financial security.

#### The Way Forward

One of the most effective ways to uplift low-wage workers is through learning programs that provide them with better skills and experience. These programs can enhance their job prospects, help them secure stable employment, and improve their quality of life. It is time for action. We must prioritize the well-being of our workforce, recognize their invaluable contributions, and create policies that protect their rights. A nation's progress depends not just on its industries but also on the dignity and empowerment of its workers.



# Chief Justice chairs High-Level meeting to strengthen functioning of Legal Aid Clinic & Support Centres at GMCH Jammu, Srinagar

■ HT News Network

JAMMU, MARCH 25: J&K Legal Services Authority under the esteemed guidance of Justice Tashi Rabstan, Chief Justice, High Court of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh (Patron-in-Chief, J&K Legal Services Authority) today convened a virtual meeting with all the Secretaries of District Legal Services Authorities (DLSAs), Medical Superintendents of Government Medical College & Hospital (GMCH) Jammu and Srinagar and Jail Superintendents along with Medical Officers of the jails across the UT of J&K and Ladakh.

The objective was to com-

prehensively review and reinforce the legal aid mechanisms to health care available to inmates in correctional facilities across the region.

During the deliberations, special emphasis was placed on the recently inaugurated Legal Aid Clinics at GMCH Jammu and Srinagar, underscoring the need to extend similar facilities to all correctional institutions across the UTs. It was resolved that these Legal Aid Clinics should be fully operationalized with designated Legal Aid Defense Counsels (LADCs) and Para-Legal Volunteers (PLVs) to ensure seamless and timely access to legal assistance for inmates. To enhance accessibil-



ity and outreach, it was further mandated that the contact details of PLVs, Legal Aid Counsel and nodal officers nomi-

nated by the GMCH Jammu and Srinagar be prominently displayed in all jails, ensuring that every inmate is aware of their

rights and can seek legal assistance without procedural hindrance. This initiative aligns with the broader objective of

expediting special medical attention and ensuring the swift resolution of pending legal matters. Additionally, Jail Superintendents were directed to extend all necessary facilities to avail all benefits of providing the specialized medical treatment from the Legal Aid Clinics available at GMCH Jammu & Srinagar, including specialized medical care, psychological counseling and legal consultation to inmates, reinforcing the commitment to upholding their fundamental rights, as enshrined in the Constitution of India and international human rights conventions. The Chief Justice reiterated the importance of a coordinated

approach involving jail authorities, legal services institutions, and healthcare professionals to ensure the holistic well-being of inmates. The meeting concluded with a firm commitment from all stakeholders to strengthen legal aid infrastructure across correctional institutions, with continued efforts to enhance Legal Aid Clinics, legal literacy initiatives and rehabilitation programs and health care of jail inmates across the UT of J&K and Ladakh. The J&K Legal Services Authority remains steadfast in its mission to uphold justice, ensure access to legal remedies, and safeguard the dignity and rights of all individuals, particularly those in custody.

## CEO Shrine Board calls for unified efforts ahead of Chaitra Navratra

■ HT News Network

Katra, March 25: In anticipation of the upcoming Chaitra Navratra, Anshul Garg, Chief Executive Officer, Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board undertook a comprehensive review of operational preparedness at Spiritual Growth Centre, Katra underscoring the importance of unified efforts among all stakeholders and security agencies to manage the expected surge in pilgrim footfall during the nine-day festival to ensure a seamless and peaceful pilgrimage experience for devotees visiting the Holy Cave Shrine.

The meeting was attended by Addl. Chief Executive Officer, SMVDSB; SSP, Security; SSP, Reasi; Commandant, CRPF; Jt. Chief Executive Officer, SMVDSB; SP, Katra; Sub Divisional Magistrate, Bhawan & Katra; Dy. CEO; Asstt. CEOs; Tehsildar; ACF SMVDSB; SDPO Katra & Bhawan and officers from Army, IB, CID, Fire Services, SMVDSB and other intelligence agencies.

Laying focus on the pilgrim safety and smooth regulation of Yatra as per the directions of Chairman,



SMVDSB (Lt. Governor, JK-UT), CEO emphasized for a robust security grid at all key sectors of the Shrine, complemented by real-time monitoring through CCTV cameras. These cameras will provide round-the-clock surveillance along the route from Katra to Bhawan, allowing for swift response to any situation. Additionally, appealed to pilgrims to wear a valid RFID card at all times before embarking on the Yatra, facilitating smooth access to various facilities and services during their journey.

The CEO stressed the importance of leveraging modern security gadgets during Navratras to ensure a safe and secure environment. These gadgets, acquired by the Board after last year's Joint Security Review (JSR) based on the

Hon'ble Chairman's directions which include X-Ray Baggage Scanner, Door Frame Metal Detector, Hand Held Metal Detector and Under Vehicle Search Mirror to ensure a comprehensive security framework. He directed the concerned quarters upon verification and census of pony porters so as to check any suspicious element on the track by the concerned agencies and extensive checking at different places of Katra for overcharging of fare. The Chief Executive Officer also conducted a comprehensive review of disaster management measures, emphasizing fire-fighting, crowd management and preparedness to ensure prompt and effective responses in emergency situations. To bolster crowd management, the CEO directed the Disaster

Management Task Force (DMTF) of the Shrine Board to monitor vulnerable areas and issue alerts. Furthermore, regular announcements and beat monitoring by joint stakeholder teams will be implemented at Bhawan to manage crowd congestion, identify holding areas and ensure seamless Yatra management.

The CEO instructed the stakeholders to ensure the availability of essential amenities including clean drinking water, uninterrupted power supply and sanitation facilities with proper disposal of waste besides regulation of vehicles on the track. Additionally, he emphasized the need for 24x7 emergency medical services to promptly address any medical emergencies.

Security agencies highlighted major challenges for the deployed security forces in coming days for managing the expected influx of pilgrims on Navratra. A detailed security grid was also presented by SSP Reasi and Commandant, CRPF, outlining measures such as Quick Response Teams (QRTs) and a Multi-Tier Security Grid.

## از دفتر نائب تحصیلدار پھلگام

درخواست منجانب سال محمد یعقوب میر ولد غلام می میر ساکنہ بڑکوت تحصیل پھلگام ضلع دشت ناگ برار وصول RBA سر تفکیک مکتبی دفتر عظمیٰ یعقوب

### اشتہار ہماراد آگاہی

معاملمندہ بعنوان میں درخواست سال دفتر ذیل زیر کاروانی ہے اس نسبت بنواری حلقہ سے رپورٹ منظور مطلوبہ نقوالاٹ ریکارڈ طلب کے کہ جس سے عیال ہوتا ہے سال موضع سال بڑکوت میں رہائش پزیر ہے سال بیک واڈ زمرہ میں اتالیے سال دھرم کوکا منتقل باشندہ ہے سال کامنہ بدیل افراد

1. محمد یعقوب میر ولد غلام می 50 سال سرکاری ملازم
2. جمینا اختر زوجہ محمد یعقوب 48 سال گھر بیگام
3. ... مکتبی یعقوب دختر 21 سال زیر تعلیم
4. ... روینا یعقوب دختر 16 سال زیر تعلیم
5. ... مظفر یعقوب پسر 14 سال
6. ... عرفان یعقوب پسر 8 سال

اس کے علاوہ کوئی بھی افراد میں بتایا جائی مطالب سرمنیجٹ زیر بحث اذہ کر نے میں اگر کسی شخص یا اشخاص کو عذر یا اعتراض ہو تو وہ اپنا عذر یا اعتراض ساتھ دن کے اندر اندر پیش کریں معاذ گور نے کے بعد کوئی عذر یا اعتراض قابل قبول میں ہوگا

### نائب تحصیلدار پھلگام

Subject: Grant of registration of the paying Guest house/ Home stay under the name and style " Darya Residency Paying Guest House/Home Stay" Situated at Habbak Naseeb Bagh Hazratbal Srinagar.

### PUBLIC NOTICE

Whereas, I Ab Rashid Wani S/o: Ali Mohammad Wani R/o: Habbak Naseeb Bagh Hazratbal Srinagar. Intends to apply in the office of Prescribed Authority of Directorate of Tourism Kashmir for registration of my proposed Paying Guest House/Home Stay under the Name & Style "Darya Residency Paying Guest House/Home Stay" Situated at near Habbak Naseeb Bagh Hazratbal Srinagar. under Tourist trade Act 1978/82/2011-12.

Whereas I will submit Landownership Certificate from Concerned Tehsildar with attest photographs of the unit through Dy. Commissioner Concerned, Rent/ Lease Deed/ Partnership Deed/ issued by concerned Sub-Registrar, Judicial Magistrate (if applicable NOC from the owner to the effect that the property can be used as Home Stay), Character Certificate of the applicant from the Concerned Police Station, undertaking from the owner as self declaration, Public Notice inviting objections, if any in print media, list of family members Name, Age and Photograph self attested by owner, photographs of the unit as mentioned in the application (each of exterior and individual bed rooms and bathrooms), Inspection report by the Committee shall decide whether to issue a registration to the unit or not keeping in view, the type of accommodation and amenity, aadhar card. Now before my case is processed for registration by the prescribed Authority. The matter is hereby notified for information of general Public/ Organizations for objections if any and the same should reach to the office of prescribed Authority within a period of 7 days from the publication of this notice in leading local newspaper of the valley. Objections received beyond the period of 7 days from the date of publication shall not be entertained and the case shall be processed under rules as per merit.

## PUBLIC NOTICE

I want to correct the name of my son as Muzamil Muneer Mir S/o Muneer Ahmad Mir which is wrongly mentioned as Muzamil Manzoor Mir S/o Manzoor Ahmad Mir Now I want to change the name of my son. If anybody has any objection in this regard he/she may file the same before the concerned authority within a period of seven days from the date of publication of this notice, after that no objection shall be entertained.

Muneer Ahmad Mir  
Father of Muzamil Muneer Mir  
R/o Najibhat Baramulla

## PUBLIC NOTICE

I want to correct the name of my son as Mudansir Muneer Mir S/o Muneer Ahmad Mir which is wrongly mentioned as Mudansir Manzoor Mir S/o Manzoor Ahmad Mir Now I want to change the name of my son. If anybody has any objection in this regard he/she may file the same before the concerned authority within a period of seven days from the date of publication of this notice, after that no objection shall be entertained.

Muneer Ahmad Mir  
Father of Mudansir Muneer Mir  
R/o Najibhat Baramulla

## Gen Secretary of AMK, Shabnum Tilgami Bereaved

■ HT News Network

Muradabad Kreeri June 23 : Death of father of Shabnam Tilgami has been widely Condolenced across Socio- Political and literary Circles. The deceased left for heavenly abode on 24th of March at Tilgam and was laid to rest at his ancestral graveyard at Tilgam Pattan.

Patron of Kruhen Cultural Forum Muradabad Kreeri Syed Sad ud din Saidi, Former Cabinet Minister Syed Basharat Bukhari, Jammu and Kashmir National Conference Senior leader Mohammad Yaqoob wani, Adbi Markaz Kamraz's Patron Dr Rafiq Masoodi, President Muhammed Amin Bhat, Sarwar Hashmi President Manzoor Hashmi Cultural Forum watergam kreeri, Chief Editor of daily Headlines Today Syed Jahangir Bukhari and Various Socio Political personalities from across Kashmir valley, expressed deep shock and grief over the demise of father of Shabnam Tilgami Secretary Adbi Markaz Kamraz. Condolence messages issued through social media, people described departed soul as an epitome of simplicity, pious person who left this mortal world to the final destination. Most of the people termed this death as a huge loss. All of them prayed to Almighty Allah to grant him Jannat and cofer endurance to the bereaved family members, friends and acquaintances to bear this irreparable loss.

Expressing solidarity with the bereaved family Editor in Chief of daily Headlines Today prayed for eternal peace to the departed soul.

## Casual Daily Workers Demand Minimum Wages Act Implementation,

### Slam Political Apathy

■ HT News Network

Srinagar, : The Jammu & Kashmir Casual Daily Workers Forum on Tuesday accused the government of failing to fulfill promises made to them and condemned the alleged police lathi charge against their protesting colleagues in Jammu. Addressing the media in Srinagar, Forum President Sajad Parray expressed disappointment, stating, "We voted for the NC to fulfill our demands, not to be thrashed. Instead of addressing our issues, political parties are busy blaming each other in the Assembly." He added that their protests have been ongoing for decades, including during the Mufti-led government, but their voices continue to be ignored. Parray also recalled that Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha had invited them to Raj Bhawan and assured action, but those assurances remain unfulfilled. He criticized the present government for forming a committee to examine their demands but failing to take any concrete steps. "Now they have politicized our issue, with parties accusing each other instead of addressing our plight. Some even allege that casual laborers are 'sponsored,' which is a baseless and blatant lie," he said.

## PUBLIC NOTICE

My name has been wrongly written as FAIZAN NISSAR MALIK in my Adhaar card while my correct name is MALIK FAIZAN which needs to be corrected if anybody having any objection in this regard he /she may file his / her objection in the office of concerned Aadhar authorities within seven days from the publication of this notice after that no objection will be entertained.

Name.....MALIK FAIZAN  
R/O DAULATPORA KREERI  
Contact no.....9541344459

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 HAFSA IQBAL S/O MOHAMMAD IQBAL MAGRAY R/O KAREWA KREERI Tehsil KREERI Distt. Baramulla having verified the date of Birth as 01/01/2020 and event has been shown to be occurred at SDH KREERI for issuance of delay order .In this connection . if anyone have any objection to the issuance of delay order of Birth certificate shall present his/her claim this office within 07 days, after that no objection shall be entertained  
Executive Magistrate  
1st Class KREERI

## OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER R&B DIVISION SHOPIAN

Fax No./ Tell No: 01933-260226

Email: rmbdivisonshopian@gmail.com

### EXTENSION NOTICE

It is notified for the information of all concerned that due to poor tender response for the work advertised vide this office NIT No:- **STAGE/79 /9002-07/Le-tendering //RnB/SPN/2024-25 Dated:-13-03-2025** figuring at S. No. 01, accordingly, the critical dates for the work are hereby :

### Extended as

1	Bid Submission End Date	04-04-2025 up to 2:00 PM
2	Date & time of opening of Bids (Online)	05-04-2025 at 11:00 A.M in the Office of the Executive Engineer R&B Division Shopian.

### Instead of

1	Bid Submission End Date	24-03-2025 up to 2:00 PM
2	Date & time of opening of Bids (Online)	25-03-2025 at 11:00 A.M in the Office of the Executive Engineer R&B Division Shopian.

DIPK-13385/24  
Dt: 25-03-2025

Sd/-  
Executive Engineer  
R&B Division Shopian

## OFFICE OF THE PRINCIPAL MAGISTERIAL JUVENILE JUSTICE BOARD KUPWARA

Appointed Under Section 176(1) of the Code of Criminal Procedure

## PUBLIC NOTICE

It is hereby informed to the general public that a Magisterial Inquiry is being conducted by the undersigned into the custodial death of Mohd Maqbool Khan S/O Ab Gaffar Khan R/O Kukroosa, Tehsil Vilgam, which occurred on 27-12-2022 in District Jail Kupwara. In this regard by virtue of this public notice all the persons having any direct or indirect knowledge regarding the circumstances leading to the death of the deceased are hereby requested to appear before the undersigned and record their statements within 15 days from the date of publication of this notice.  
Office Address: Juvenile Justice board, SM City Centre Branwari Kupwara.  
Contact No: 01955252090

Date: Mar 25 2025  
DIPK-13406/24

Principal Magistrate  
Juvenile justice Kupwara













# Nasha Mukht Bharat Abhiyaan 700 trained as resource persons to steer anti-drug IEC Campaign in Kishtwar

■ HT News Network

KISHTWAR, MARCH 25: District Administration Kishtwar organised a significant training session to train 700 individuals as resource persons to conduct the Information, Education, and Communication (IEC) campaign against drugs under the Nasha Mukht Bharat Abhiyan (NMBA).

The training covered varied aspects of the IEC campaign, with a particular focus on the role and responsibilities of the resource persons in the field. The participants were also educated on the process of updating information on the NMBA application to ensure accurate and real-time data.

Under the NMBA, over 200 events will be conducted across all Panchayats, Revenue villages, and Municipal wards start-



ing from April 2025. These events will be held every Monday in each block across the district, aiming to raise awareness and educate the public on the detrimental effects of drug abuse.

The campaign will be a collaborative effort with active participation of officers from the Police Department, Poshan (ICDS) Department, Rural Development Department (RDD), Excise and Taxation

Department, Health Department, Education Department, Youth Services & Sports Department, JKSRIL/NRLM Department. Deputy Commissioner (DC) Rajesh Kumar Shavan was the Chief Guest. He emphasized the importance of close coordination among all departments and officials. He urged everyone to work together to ensure the success of these events, which aim to curb the growing menace of drug abuse in the region.

Resource Persons from Tehsils and blocks like Paddar, Chatroo, Mughal Maidan and Dachan were imparted training through an online platform to ensure accessibility and wide participation.

The event was attended by ACR Idrees lone, ASP Pawan Sharma, DSWO Zubair Ahmed, TSWO Rajesh Kumar, Dr. Wajid ATF besides staff of Social Welfare Department.

## Over 3.6 lakh students appear in BOSE exams in J&K, Ladakh Board thanks SED, Police, DCs

■ HT News Network

JAMMU MARCH 25: The JKBOSE has successfully conducted the annual examinations for 10th, 11th and 12th classes, which were spread over 3600 centres across the Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh Union territories.

In all, over 3.6 lakh students took the exam at the designated centres set up in both soft and hard zones. The JKBOSE has expressed gratitude to the School Education, Police, District Administration and Postal Departments for extending their whole-hearted support in conducting fair, smooth and transparent examinations across all districts of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh.

The evaluation process has already started with an efficient system put in place to ensure fair checking of the papers in a time bound manner. The BOSE looks forward to the compilation and declaration of timely results in adherence to set protocol.

In the meantime, the Board is in the process of verifying records of internal assessments from affiliated institutions and the concerned school managements have been advised to ensure submission of authentic records of the students to curb the incidence of commission of minor mistakes. In the meantime, the Board is in the process of verifying records of internal assessments from affiliated institutions and the concerned school managements have been advised to ensure submission of authentic records of the students.

## Director SWD assesses working of department in Reasi District

■ HT News Network

REASI, MARCH 25: Director Social Welfare Department Jammu Rupesh Kumar today visited several offices and institutions of the Social Welfare Department in Reasi to review the execution of welfare initiatives and assess their impact on the community. The visit aimed to ensure the effective implementation of the department's programs and services for vulnerable groups in the region.

Upon arrival, the Director was warmly welcomed by District Social Welfare Officer (DSWO) Sachin Sharma. During the visit to the District Social Welfare Office, the Director was given an overview of the department's activities. He interacted with the office staff, appreciating their hard work and dedication. He encouraged them to continue their efforts and emphasized that no beneficiary should be left out of the services and benefits offered by the Social Welfare Department.

The Director's tour continued with



a visit to several key institutions, starting with Parisha Girls Home where he interacted with the staff and ensured that the basic needs of the children were being met. He reaffirmed the department's commitment to improve the living conditions and care for children in institutional settings, stressing the importance of their well-being and future prospects.

At the Tehsil Social Welfare Office Reasi, the Director inspected the newly revived Craft Center. He spoke with the trainees and encouraged the formation of Self-Help Groups (SHGs) to improve the marketing and sale of their products. He also proposed the establishment of similar

craft centers in other parts of Reasi to cater to the growing demand from local communities.

The Director's visit concluded with stops at the Aashiyana Senior Citizens Home and the proposed Garima Greh (Transgender Home). At Aashiyana, the Director engaged with the senior residents and directed officials to ensure they received all necessary amenities and regular medical check-ups. At the Garima Greh location, he interacted with transgender residents and instructed the NGO involved to ensure their medical checkups and the creation of Transgender ID cards. Mr. Kumar also reviewed infrastructure projects under the Pradhan

## DDC Chairman Jammu seeks speedy desilting of minor canals, Kuhl

■ HT News Network

JAMMU, MARCH 25: Chairman District Development Council Bharat Bhushan today chaired a meeting to review the progress of desilting works on minor canals and kuhl across the district.

DDC Vice Chairman Suraj Singh was also present in the meeting held at the district headquarters. Expressing concern over the sluggish pace of the works, the DDC Chairman directed the departments concerned to expedite the process and ensure its completion within a week. He emphasized the need for coordinated efforts on the ground and instructed teams from the Rural Development Department and the Irrigation & Flood Control Department to conduct joint inspections. The Chairman stressed that on-site visits would help identify and resolve any issues hindering the progress of desilting and cleaning operations. The meeting was



attended by Chief Planning Officer Uttam Singh; Assistant Commissioner Development Dr Vikas Sharma and AD Planning Satish Sharma. Block Development Officers and Executive Engineers from Irrigation Division I, II and Akhnoor, as well as representatives from the Ravi Tawi Irrigation Complex and Rural Engineering Wing, joined the meeting virtually. Farmers from different parts of the district, including Gajan Singh, Tilak Raj, Shamsher Singh and Devinder Singh, also par-

ticipated online, sharing their concerns and providing feedback on the ongoing works.

The meeting was attended by Chief Planning Officer Uttam Singh; Assistant Commissioner Development Dr Vikas Sharma and AD Planning Satish Sharma. Block Development Officers and Executive Engineers from Irrigation Division I, II and Akhnoor, as well as representatives from the Ravi Tawi Irrigation Complex and Rural Engineering Wing, joined the meeting virtually.

## District Police Jammu organises Tug of War Competition at GHSS Bishnah

■ HT News Network

JAMMU, MARCH 25: As part of the ongoing Civic Action Programme (CAP), the District Police Jammu hosted the final match of Tug of War (Girls) competition here in the Government Girls Higher Secondary School Bishnah.

The competition was held between Staff/Students of Government Girls Higher Secondary School Bishnah and a team of District Police Jammu here in the premises of the host School. After tough competition, the Women's team of District Police Jammu won the match by defeating the team of GHSS Bishnah. The occasion was graced with the presence of the school Principal Anju Gupta as the Chief Guest.

The match was witnessed by SP Headquarters Jammu Irshad Hussain Rather and SHO Bishnah Inspector Sushil Choudhary besides locals of the area and members of the media fraternity. The winning team was awarded a cash prize and trophy. Speaking on the occasion SP Headquarters Jammu emphasized that J&K Police is committed to engage with youth through sports activities as a constructive initiative to steer them away from drug abuse & other social evils.

The event received great appreciation from the local community, particularly the youth, who hailed the efforts of the police in promoting positive and healthy engagements in Bishnah and adjacent areas.

## Kishtwar: Awareness imparted to women on Menstrual Hygiene

■ HT News Network

KISHTWAR, MARCH 25: SANKALP: Hub for Empowerment of Women (HEW) today organised a Special Awareness Program at Health Centre Melan focusing on menstrual hygiene for enhanced reproductive health. The SANKALP-HEW team emphasized that it is crucial to prioritise awareness when it comes to menstrual health, not only for women but for society as a whole. The team emphasized that the purpose of these camps is to impart awareness to women about essential health check-ups for various health issues. The Sankalp team also focussed on educating women about important health topics such as contraceptive methods, family planning, urinary tract infections (UTIs), menstrual hygiene and adolescent health. Besides, the participants were also educated about various women centric schemes. At the end, Sankalp HEW distributed free sanitary pads to promote menstrual health and hygiene among women.

## GDC Neeli Nallah releases maiden newsletter "Neer: The Campus Chronicles"

■ HT News Network

UDHAMPUR, MARCH 25: Government Degree College Neeli Nallah Udhampur today launched its maiden Newsletter, "Neer: The Campus Chronicles", marking a significant milestone for the institution. The event was held under the guidance of Principal of the College Prof. (Dr.) Seema Arora and attended by Principal Guests Prof. Kuldeep Sharma, Principal GDC Jindrah; Dr. Rajni Bhagat, Principal GDC Katra and Dr. Shalini Sharma, Principal GDC Majalta. The programme commenced with the lighting of the ceremonial lamp followed by Saraswati Vandana presented by the students.

After the welcome address, the newsletter was unveiled as a testament of the college's accomplishments, academic excellence, innovation and community engagement, highlighting the notable achievements of the students and the staff members. In the end, the Principal and the invited guests felicitated and awarded the students who have displayed exceptional talent and achieved remarkable victories in various academic, cultural and sporting endeavours acknowledging their perseverance and dedication.

The vote of thanks was given by Prof. Shaista Yasmeen, Department of English.

## 2 Day Viksit Bharat Youth Parliament concludes at GDC Udhampur

■ HT News Network

UDHAMPUR, MARCH 25: Government Degree College Udhampur concluded the District Level Viksit Bharat Youth Parliament today.

Viksit Bharat Youth Parliament is a platform for young voices to engage in national discussions and shape the vision for Viksit Bharat@2047. Govt. Degree College Udhampur, acted as the nodal institution for five districts including Udhampur, Ramban, Reasi, Kathua and Kishtwar. The event was organised in the Conference Hall of the College.

The inaugural session of the event was hosted by Dr. Jasmeet Kour where Principal, Dr. Sanjay Kumar Verma welcomed the jury members with a token of appreciation.

The panel of distinguished jury members included Angraz Singh( Retd. Assistant Commissioner (Development), Prof. B.B Anand (Retd. Principal), Prof. Ranjeet Singh Jamwal (Retd. Principal), Kushal Gupta (District Youth Officer, NYKS) and Jasveer Singh (DDC Councillor). Dr. Gurpreet Kour, District Nodal Officer gave a brief about the screening process and rules of the event. She informed that 150 participants out of 310 participants were selected by the screening Committee for the District Level event.

During the two day event, five sessions were conducted that involved 150 participants. Each participant was given 3 minutes to speak on the topic "One Nation, One Election: Paving the Way for Viksit Bharat." The proceedings of the session were conducted by Dr. Anju Rani, Prof. Sanjeet Singh, and Prof. Rajesh Singh Manhas.

The Valedictory Ceremony was hosted by Prof. Anoksha Sharma. It involved the felicitation of winners and jury members. A total of 10 participants were selected by the panel of jury members to represent Udhampur Nodal District in the State level Youth Parliament. The top ten winners of

## Renovation works intensified in Kathua Town to ensure Pothole-Free roads

■ HT News Network

KATHUA, MARCH 25: In a proactive step towards improving road infrastructure, the District Administration Kathua has launched an extensive drive to repair potholes and ensure proper leveling of roads across the Municipal limits of Kathua Municipal Council. This initiative aims to provide a smoother commuting experience for residents, ease

vehicular movement and enhance urban mobility. The resurfacing work is being carried out systematically, with priority given to roads in the worst condition. The initiative has been taken by Deputy Commissioner Dr. Rakesh Minhas to improve road quality in a time-bound manner. He assured that the ongoing works would be completed efficiently, ensuring long-term durability of the roads. He further emphasized that good road infrastructure is essential for public conve-



nience and that the administration is making every effort to address road-related grievances at the earliest.

Under this drive, key locations have been identified where road conditions require urgent attention. High-quality materials are being used to ensure that the resurfaced roads remain durable and withstand changing weather conditions. Special attention is being given to ensuring smooth and safe movement for both vehicles and pedestrians, reducing the inconvenience caused by potholes and uneven surfaces. The administration has deployed dedicated teams working round

the clock to complete the project swiftly while maintaining the highest construction standards.

The District Administration Kathua urges residents to cooperate during the execution of this important work. Efforts are being made to minimize disruptions while ensuring timely completion of the resurfacing drive. This initiative is part of the administration's broader vision of strengthening civic infrastructure and improving public welfare.







# RS Chairman calls meeting of floor leaders on alleged cash recovery at judge's residence

## AGENCIES

NEW DELHI, MAR 25

Rajya Sabha Chairman Jagdeep Dhankhar has convened a meeting with floor leaders on Tuesday at 4:30 PM to discuss the matter concerning the alleged recovery of a huge amount of cash at the residence of Delhi High Court Judge Yashwant Verma.

As soon as the House convened for the day, Dhankhar shared this information. He stated that he would meet with the Leader of the House, JP Nadda, and the Leader of the Opposition, Mallikarjun Kharge, again at 4:30 PM today.

Earlier, he told the House that a notice has been received under Rule 267 demanding discussion on this issue but has not been accepted. He, however, said that members can raise this issue during the Zero Hour.

In response, Congress member Pramod Tiwari emphasized the gravity of the issue, stating that it should be discussed. The Chairman remarked that the matter extends beyond



judicial mismanagement, as it is connected to the sovereignty, supremacy, and significance of Parliament.

He said, "Hon'ble Members, this House, keeping dignity in mind, demonstrating dignified conduct, unanimously created a legal system in 2015, and that constitutional structure that emanated unanimously with one abstention from the Parliament endorsed by state legislatures should be rule of law because it was sanctified by the Hon'ble President by appending her signatures under Article 111. Now is the befitting occasion for all of us to reiterate that because that was

a visionary step endorsed by Parliament. And imagine if that had taken place, things would have been different".

He said, "Now, before the nation, there are two situations, one, what emanated from the Indian Parliament, duly endorsed by State Legislatures, sanctified by the Hon'ble President by appending signatures under Article 111, and second, is a judicial order".

Dhankhar said, "Hon'ble Members, I had the benefit yesterday of the wise counsel, experienced counsel of Leader of the House and Leader of the Opposition who were gracious enough to

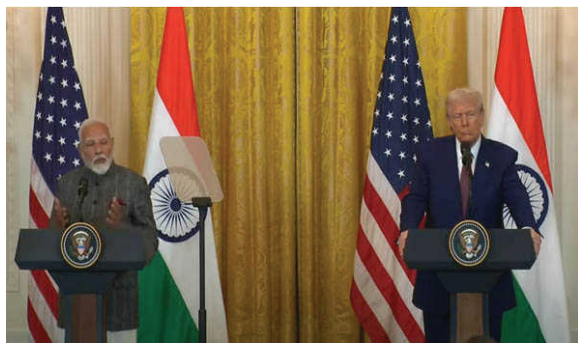
respond to my invitation for an interaction on this very critical issue that is agitating minds in all branches of governance".

"I have scheduled a meeting after seeking convenience at 4.30 p.m. today with the floor leaders as suggested by Leader of the Opposition and agreed to by Leader of the House and timing has also been indicated to the concerned," the Chairman said.

He further added, "I do not wish to be judgmental on any issue but one thing which has found widespread acceptability in the country is that the entire material available with the Supreme Court has been shared with the people at large and constitution of a committee with that speed I'm sure things will be available to us".

Kharge then praised the Chairman for his deep knowledge of the Constitution. He also said that transparency in the House is important, and said he is looking forward to a discussion with the leaders of the House at 4.30 pm today.

## India may offer tariff cuts on US imports



## AGENCIES

NEW DELHI, MAR 25

India appears willing to cut tariffs on more than half of US imports worth 23 billion dollars to avoid heavy tariff duty on the Indian exports. Representatives of the two countries are expected to finalize a trade deal during their extensive talks here.

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman has already reduced custom duty on American breweries and motorcycles while presenting annual budget.

This would be one of the biggest tariff cuts being taken by the Indian government to avoid reciprocal tariffs that could hurt Indian exports.

The government is trying to reduce the impact of US President Donald Trump's global reciprocal tariffs, which are set to take effect from April 2. The new tariff regime imposed by the Trump administration has disrupted international markets and created concerns among many countries, including America's

Western allies.

According to reports, the new US tariffs could impact 87% of Indian exports to the US, which are worth around \$66 billion.

The proposal for reducing tariff on the US goods is still under discussion, and Indian government has not made a final decision. Other options being explored include adjusting tariffs for specific sectors instead of a broad tariff cut and negotiating reductions for selected products rather than reducing tariffs across multiple industries.

A US delegation, led by Brendan Lynch, Assistant US Trade Representative for South and Central Asia, is scheduled to visit India for trade talks which began today.

Tuesday. During Prime Minister Modi's visit to Washington in February, the two countries agreed to start early trade deal talks to resolve their tariff disputes. However, India's willingness to reduce tariffs depends on whether the US agrees to ease reciprocal tariffs.

## Delhi CM announces Rs 300 crores budget for mitigating pollution

## AGENCIES

NEW DELHI, MAR 25

The Delhi Government on Tuesday allocated Rs 300 crores for controlling pollution in metropolitan city which has become major health hazard.

Chief Minister Rekha Gupta presented one lakh crore budget for the year 2025-26 and also announced 500 crores for environment and forest department. Delhi has become most polluted city in the world, and it has caused health issues to children and elderly citizens.

Stubble burning, construction dust, and vehicle emissions cause serious pollution problems. It is because of that the BJP government is focusing on controlling pollution.

Water and air pollution need major attention to provide people better air quality as well as clean drinking water.

## INDIA bloc student wing protests at Jantar Mantar

## AGENCIES

NEW DELHI, MAR 25

Student organizations affiliated with INDIA bloc parties staged a protest against the New Education Policy (NEP) 2020, paper leaks, the UGC draft rules and growing privatization of education at Jantar Mantar here on Monday.

The protest was led by Congress-led student wing, National Students' Union of India (NSUI)-led INDIA.

During the demonstration, the members of the several student organisations shouted slogans while holding aloft placards, against the ruling dispensation. Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi and several other MPs from the Opposition parties also participated in the protest.

Addressing the students, Gandhi warned against Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) control over education and urged them to fight for academic freedom.

"The BJP-RSS want to control education to suppress independent thinking. Students must resist their agenda, unite and take this movement nationwide. This is a fight for India's future," he said.

## No database of Bihar Rajya Fasal Sahayata Yojana: CAG

## AGENCIES

PATNA, MAR 25

The Cooperative Department did not have any database of potential beneficiaries required for planning, monitoring, and ensuring satisfactory coverage under the Bihar Rajya Fasal Sahayata Yojana, according to a report of the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) of India.

The Deputy Chief Minister, Samrat Choudhary, tabled the CAG report (Performance and Compliance Audit- Civil) of the Bihar government for the year ended 31 March 2022 in the state assembly on Tuesday. The report revealed that out of 50,91,243 verified applications, 52 percent of applications (26,30,462 applications) were rejected, due to issues relating to Land Possession Certificates (LPCs), self-declarations, absence during verification, and others.

The report said that against the overall financial assistance of Rs 1,424.59 crore related to 24,08,275 transactions, benefits amounting to Rs 867.36 crore, relating to 15,27,419 transactions had been paid with delays ranging up to 21 months.

Due to non-linking of Aadhaar with the farmers' bank accounts, closure of accounts etc., transactions amounting to Rs 51.11 crore had failed, across different crop seasons during 2018-21.

According to the report, neither meetings of the State Level Coordination Committee (SLCC) nor District Level Coordination Committee (DLCC) were held timely nor was the impact of the Scheme evaluated.

## Bengal has always believed in building bridges, not walls: Mamata

## AGENCIES

KOLKATA, MAR 25

Bengal has always believed in building bridges, not walls, said West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee.

Attending a high tea reception at India House in London, hosted by Vikram Kumar Doraiswami, High Commissioner of India to the United Kingdom, Banerjee said, "Bengal has always believed in building bridges, not walls. As we continue to expand our global footprint, we look forward to fostering stronger ties with our partners in the UK and beyond."

"Today, I was honoured to attend a high tea reception at India House, hosted by Shri Vikram Kumar Doraiswami, High Commissioner of India to the United Kingdom. The event brought together the official and business delegation from Bengal alongside eminent leaders from the industry, cultural, and social sectors in the UK, all united by a shared vision for deeper collaboration," Banerjee added.

"Our discussions centred on strengthening economic partnerships, enhancing people-to-people ties, and exploring new avenues of cooperation that benefit both Bengal and Britain. By harnessing our collective potential, we aim to create opportunities that are mutually enriching and future-ready," she stated.

## Boeing seeks to withdraw guilty plea agreement over 737 MAX crashes

## AGENCIES

SAN FRANCISCO, MAR 25

Boeing is seeking to withdraw an agreement to plead guilty to a criminal fraud charge related to two fatal 737 MAX crashes, The Wall Street Journal reported on Monday, citing sources familiar with the matter.

The company is reportedly seeking more lenient treatment from the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ)

The crashes, which occurred in 2018 and 2019, claimed 346 lives. The DOJ accused Boeing of deliberately misleading regulators about the Maneuvering Characteristics Augmentation System, which had a critical flaw that contributed to both accidents.

In 2021, Boeing and the DOJ entered into a deferred prosecution agreement,



allowing the company to avoid a criminal conviction if it complied with certain conditions for three years. However, just days before the agreement was set to expire, a newly delivered 737 MAX plane operated by Alaska Airlines suffered an inflight panel detachment, raising renewed concerns over Boeing's quality control and manufacturing practices.

In May 2024, the DOJ determined that Boeing had violated the terms of

the agreement, leading to a plea deal reached in July. The proposed deal required Boeing to pay a fine of 244 million U.S. dollars, invest 455 million dollars in compliance and safety improvements, and accept the oversight of an independent monitor. However, in December 2024, U.S. District Judge Reed O'Connor rejected the plea agreement.

Judge O'Connor has set an April 11 deadline for Boeing and the DOJ to

provide an update on how they plan to proceed. The Wall Street Journal reported that Boeing is now preparing to withdraw its guilty plea agreement and aims to avoid the appointment of an independent monitor.

Families of the crash victims have criticized the plea deal, arguing that it is too lenient and gives Boeing too much influence in selecting the independent monitor. Mark Lindquist, an attorney representing some victims' families, said Boeing had already received favorable treatment under the 2021 agreement. "They violated that agreement. Now they want an even sweeter deal," he further said.

The court docket doesn't include any formal notice from Boeing or the DOJ to withdraw the agreement yet.

## Asia a potential global leader in emerging green technologies: report

## AGENCIES

BOAO, HAINAN, MAR 25

Asia is rapidly advancing in emerging green technologies, positioning itself as a potential leader in advanced battery materials, biodegradable plastics, among others, boosted by strong industrial capabilities and policy support, according to a report by the Boao Forum for Asia released on Tuesday.

Titled "Sustainable Development: Asia and the World Annual Report 2025 -- Addressing Climate Change: Asia Going Green," the report highlights the region's progress in renewable energy.

The report notes that China now sources 85



percent of its new energy capacity from renewables, while Indonesia and Singapore are leading efforts in carbon capture and storage, per the report.

China, Japan and the Republic of Korea dominate the global supply chain for lithium battery technology, a crucial driver of transport electrification, the report high-

lights.

Meanwhile, China is at the forefront of Asia's expanding green hydrogen industry, with the region accounting for nearly 70 percent of the world's hydrogen electrolyzer capacity.

Asia's largest emitters, including China, India, Indonesia, Japan and Saudi Arabia, have set

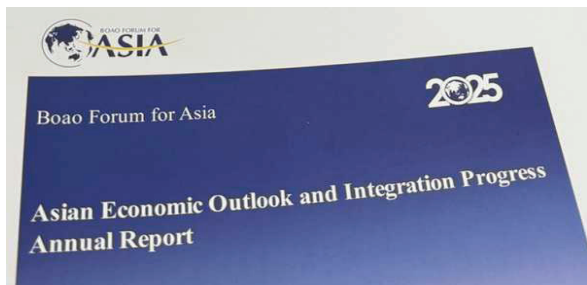
ambitious climate targets, according to the report.

For instance, most of ASEAN economies have developed comprehensive national climate action strategies and action plans to implement their Nationally Determined Contributions and National Adaptation Plans.

Despite significant progress, the report points out that while some countries have demonstrated a strong commitment to sustainability, others still have a long way to go.

Asia's role in mitigating climate change is critical as it is home to over half of the world's population, generates about half of the global GDP and accounts for more than half of global CO2 emissions.

## Asia's GDP expected to grow 4.5 pct in 2025: report



## AGENCIES

BOAO, HAINAN, MAR 25

The weighted real GDP growth rate of Asia is projected to reach 4.5 percent in 2025, an increase from 4.4 percent in 2024, according to a report released by the Boao Forum for Asia Tuesday.

"Despite increasing global economic uncertainty, Asia has remained as a key growth engine for the world economy," said the report titled Asian Eco-

nomic Outlook and Integration Progress.

At purchasing power parity, the ratio of Asia's GDP among the global total is expected to rise from 48.1 percent in 2024 to 48.6 percent in 2025, the report said. The overall situation of employment and income is turning upwards in Asia, with its unemployment rate projected at 4.39 percent in 2025, lower than the global rate of 4.96 percent, according to the report.



# Tuberculosis: Causes, Symptoms, Prevention & Treatment



**DR. TASADUK HUSSAIN ITOO**  
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Tuberculosis is an infectious disease caused by a type of bacteria called Mycobacterium Tuberculosis. The disease usually affects lungs and spreads through the air, when infected people cough, sneeze or spit. TB disease is usually treated with antibiotics and can be fatal without treatment.

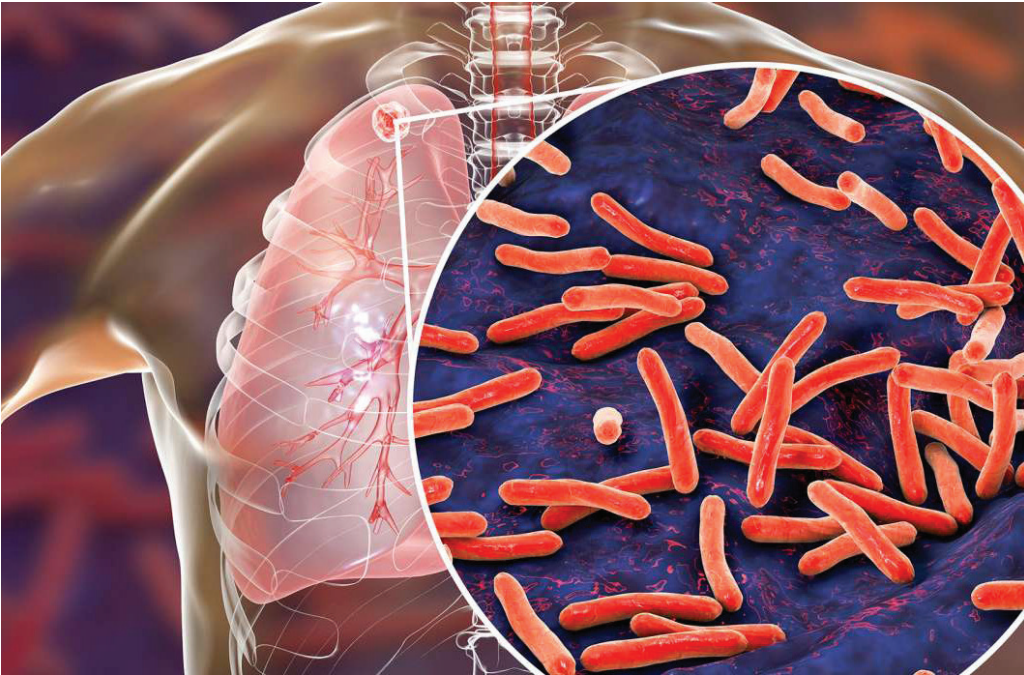
As per World Health Organisation(WHO), about a quarter of the global population is estimated to have been infected with TB bacteria. About 5-10% of people infected with TB will eventually get symptoms and develop TB disease.

ease. It is one of the leading killer diseases that led to 1.3 million deaths in 2022.

TB bacteria is also capable to attack other parts of the body like kidney, intestines, spine, or brain. However, many people who have latent TB infection never develop TB disease. As per Centers for Disease Control and Prevention(CDC), those at high risk for developing TB disease include: people with HIV infection; people who became infected with TB bacteria in the last 2 years; babies and young children; people who inject illegal drugs; people who have comorbidities that weaken the immune system; elderly people; and people who were not treated correctly for TB in the past.

Regarding the symptomatology of TB, when tuberculosis (TB) germs survive and multiply in the lungs, it is called a TB infection -- that may be in one of three stages:

Primary TB infection -- the first stage is called the primary infection. Immune system cells find and capture the germs. The immune system may



completely destroy the germs. But some captured germs may still survive and multiply. Most people don't have symptoms during a primary infection. Some people may get flu-like symptoms, such as low grade fever, tiredness, cough.

Latent TB infection -- primary infection is usually followed

by the stage called latent TB infection. Immune system cells build a wall around lung tissue with TB germs. The germs can not do any more harm if the immune system keeps them under control, but the germs survive. Usually there are no symptoms during latent TB infection.

Active TB disease -- this stage happens when the immune system can not control an infection. Germs cause disease throughout the lungs or other parts of the body. Active TB disease may happen right after primary infection. But it usually happens after months or years of latent TB infection.

Symptoms of active TB disease in the lungs usually begin gradually and worsen over a few weeks. They may include -- cough; coughing up blood or mucus; chest pain; pain with breathing or coughing; fever with chills; night sweats; weight loss; not wanting to eat; tiredness; not feeling well in general.

World Tuberculosis (TB) Day, as proposed by International Union Against Tuberculosis and Lung Disease (IUATLD) --is observed annually on 24th March since 1983 -- to raise awareness about the disease, increase efforts to eradicate the disease, and mobilise support for those affected by TB. The WTB Day 2024, continues with the theme "Yes! We can end TB" with an aim to eradicate the deadliest disease.

TB disease is preventable and can be treated with a combination of antibacterial medications, the anti-tubercular drugs for a specific time period of six to twelve months. Moreover, it is important for infected people to practice good hygiene when coughing/

sneezing, avoiding contact with other people and wearing a mask, covering one's mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing.

As per WHO, it is crucial to prevent TB infections through guidance and implementation of infection prevention and control measures. These measures are critical in situations where the risk of TB transmission is high, such as health-care facilities, congregate settings and TB-affected households.

Moreover, WHO also promotes preventive action through early screening and treatment for active TB, by addressing co-morbidities and health risks as well as social determinants of the disease, and by promoting access to universal health care.

Additionally, WHO advises and guides the TB vaccine development activities of the global research community through scientific consensus-building, guidance on vaccine evaluation, and assessment of the evidence base for policy recommendations.

## Dr Tasaduk launches patient guidance cum education initiative

Kashmir-based medico cum noted health columnist Dr Tasaduk Hussain Itoo on Saturday launched an online patient guidance cum education health initiative. The initiative will focus on to educate the public about common health issues and to listen queries from patients and guide and educate them to ensure proper prevention and treatment of their conditions.

Issuing a press statement today, Dr Tasaduk said that the emerging trends of lifestyle diseases are concerning that needs effective redressal at primary care level by imparting proper guidance, awareness and health education among public.

Pertinently, Dr Itoo is a Fellow of the International Diabetes Federation(IDF Fellow, Belgium) and further affiliated with prestigious organizations including, American College of

**DR. TASADUK HUSSAIN ITOO**

- MBBS, BSC, CPCDM
- FELLOW INTERNATIONAL DIABETES FEDERATION (IDF FELLOW, BELGIUM)
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- MEMBER, AMERICAN COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS(USA)
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- ASSOCIATE MEMBER, ROYAL COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS OF EDINBURGH(RCPE)
- JKMC REGD NO. 15414

Physicians(USA), Research Diabetes in India(RSSDI), cians of Edinburgh and Society for the Study of Royal College of Physi- London.

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## Residual cancer linked to worse long-term outcomes: Scientists

AGENCIES  
NEW YORK

Radiotherapy may leave behind microscopic cancer even when scan images suggest the tumour is gone, and this "residual disease" is more common than expected and is linked to worse long-term outcomes, researchers have warned.

Dr Muzamil Arshad from the University of Chicago Medical Center and colleagues highlighted this growing concern in cancer care, in a new editorial published in Oncotarget journal.

Their perspective calls for a rethinking of how treatment success is judged and how cancer is followed up after therapy.

Radiotherapy, especially a form known as stereotactic ablative radiotherapy (SABR), is widely used to treat cancers in the lung, liver, prostate, and



other organs.

SABR delivers high-dose radiation with outstanding precision and often shows excellent results on scans.

However, the authors highlighted that relying only on imaging may not provide a complete picture.

Months or even years later, follow-up biopsies frequently reveal cancer cells that scan imaging

tests were unable to identify.

"Residual cancer is identified on histology in 40 per cent of lung, 57-69 per cent of renal cell, 7.7-47.6 per cent of prostate and 0-86.7 per cent of hepatocellular carcinoma," said authors.

This gap between what scans show and what tissue analysis finds can have serious consequences.

es.

Studies across several cancer types have shown that patients with residual disease -- even if small -- are more likely to experience cancer recurrence and shorter survival.

This pattern holds true for rectal, cervical, prostate, and liver cancers, among others. In some cases, not destroying the tumour completely may allow it to spread to distant organs.

The authors pointed out that a complete response on scan imaging does not necessarily indicate the complete disappearance of the tumour.

The editorial encouraged the cancer care community to look beyond the scan images. Residual cancer may remain even when imaging looks clear, and recognising this hidden threat is key to improving long-term outcomes.

## High-resolution ultrasound to diagnose prostate cancer faster: Study

AGENCIES  
NEW DELHI

An international clinical trial showed on Sunday that biopsies guided by high resolution ultrasound are as effective as those using MRI in diagnosing prostate cancer.

The technology, called micro-ultrasound, is cheaper and easier to use than MRI.

"It could significantly speed up diagnosis, reduce the need for multiple hospital visits and free up MRI for other uses," said researchers. The results of the trial were presented at the European Association of Urology Congress in Madrid and published in the journal JAMA.

This is the first randomised trial to compare micro-ultrasound (microUS) guided biopsy with MRI-guided biopsy for prostate cancer. It involves 677 men who underwent biopsy at 19 hospitals across Canada,



the USA and Europe.

Of these, half underwent MRI-guided biopsy, a third received microUS-guided biopsy followed by MRI-guided biopsy and the remainder received microUS-guided biopsy alone.

MicroUS was able to identify prostate cancer as effectively as MRI-guided biopsy, with very similar rates of detection across all three arms of the trial.

There was little differ-

ence even in the group who received both types of biopsies, with the microUS detecting the majority of significant cancers, the authors noted.

MRI-guided biopsy requires a two-step process (the MRI scan, followed by the ultrasound-guided biopsy), requiring multiple hospital visits and specialist radiological expertise to interpret the MRI images and fuse them onto the ultrasound.

Micro-ultrasound has higher frequency than conventional ultrasound, resulting in three times greater resolution images that can capture similar detail to MRI scans for targeted biopsies.

Clinicians such as urologists and oncologists can be easily trained to use the technique and interpret the images, especially if they have experience in conventional ultrasound.

Laurence Klotz, Professor of Surgery at the University of Toronto's Temerty Faculty of Medicine, said that microUS can give as good a diagnostic accuracy as MRI and that is also game changing.

"It means you can offer a one stop shop, where patients are scanned, then biopsied immediately if required. There's no toxicity. There are no exclusions. It's much cheaper and more accessible. And it frees up MRIs for hips and knees and all the other things they're needed for," he noted.

## Nanotechnology breakthrough may boost treatment for aggressive breast cancer: Study

AGENCIES  
SYDNEY

Researchers in Australia are developing next-generation nanoparticles to supercharge current treatments for triple-negative breast cancer (TNBC) -- one of the most aggressive and deadly forms of the disease.

The researchers are designing innovative iron-based nanoparticles, or "nano-adjuvants," small enough to fit thousands on a single strand of hair, to strengthen the body's immune response against TNBC, according to the University of Queensland's Australian Institute for Bioengineering and Nanotechnology (AIBN) on Monday, Xinhua news agency reported.

Unlike other breast cancers, TNBC lacks the proteins targeted by some of the conventional treatments used against other cancers, making effective therapy a significant challenge, according to Prof. Yu Chengzhong from the AIBN.



"Despite the promise of immunotherapy, its effectiveness against triple-negative breast cancer is extremely limited, which is leaving too many women without options -- and that's what our research is

trying to change," Yu said.

The nanoparticles are designed to enhance the activity of T-cells, the white blood cells used to fight disease, within the tumour microenvironment, improving the immune system's ability to recognise and attack

cancer cells, according to Yu.

Supported by a 3 million Australian dollar (\$1.89 million) National Health and Medical Research Council grant, the five-year research project aims to bridge a critical treatment gap, and could pave the way for clinical applications, not only for TNBC but also for other hard-to-treat cancers like ovarian cancer.

With over two decades of experience in nanotechnology and nanomedicine, Yu hopes this breakthrough will transform cancer treatment by making immunotherapy more effective for patients with aggressive solid tumours.

"This research will push the boundaries of science to find innovative treatments that change the way we fight this cancer, offering hope for women facing devastating outcomes," said AIBN Director Alan Rowan.





# RR face tough test against KKR after record bowling collapse

## AGENCIES

GUWAHATI, MAR 25 (UNI)

Rajasthan Royals will be under immense pressure to revive their campaign as they take on Kolkata Knight Riders in a crucial sixth Indian Premier League (IPL) encounter at the Barsapara Cricket Stadium here on Wednesday.

Rajasthan suffered a crushing defeat in their opening match against Hyderabad, conceding a staggering 286 runs, the second-highest total in IPL history. Their bowling attack, led by Jofra Archer and Maheesh Theekshana, looked out of depth, raising serious concerns ahead of their clash with KKR.

The team will need an improved performance to stand a chance against a



side boasting one of the strongest spin attacks in the tournament.

Kolkata Knight Riders, led by Ajinkya Rahane, also started their campaign with a loss to Royal Challengers Bengaluru. However, they enter this contest with a significant advantage, thanks to their spin duo of Sunil Narine and Varun Chakaravathy. The Guwahati pitch has traditionally offered assis-

tance to quality spinners, which could work in KKR's favour.

With both teams yet to open their account in this IPL season, the pressure is mounting. The outcome of this match could set the tone for the rest of the season for them.

RR will look to captain Sanju Samson for a solid start, especially after his strong performance in the last game. Yashasvi Jaiswal

and Dhruv Jurel will be key contributors with the bat, while Riyan Parag will be under scrutiny after failing to deliver in the previous match.

For KKR, opener Quinton de Kock will aim to provide an explosive start, with Ajinkya Rahane anchoring the innings. The middle order, comprising Venkatesh Iyer, Rinku Singh, and Andre Russell, will need to fire after their underwhelming performance in the last match.

The toss could play a decisive role in the contest, with teams preferring to chase at this venue. Given the batting-friendly conditions, a high-scoring encounter is expected, with bowlers needing to be at their best to contain the opposition.

# Klusener calls for youngsters to step up amid injury woes

## AGENCIES

VISAKHAPATNAM, MAR 25 (UNI)

Despite the disappointment of a tough loss, LSG Assistant Coach Lance Klusener remains optimistic. The seasoned coach is not one to dwell on excuses, but as he dissected his team's performance, one point stood out, the need for young players to step up in an injury-ridden squad.

"We don't have a lot of reserves with the ball at the moment," Klusener admitted, acknowledging the struggles of his bowling attack in a post-match press conference here on late Monday night. "We have to mix and match until we get players back, but that's an opportunity for young-



sters."

One such bright spot was Shardul Thakur, who struck twice in the first over, repaying the faith shown in him. "He has spent time with us, got an opportunity in this year's IPL, and he gave us a great start," Klusener said, hinting at the potential brewing in the squad despite their

struggles.

Looking ahead, Klusener was keen to turn the page quickly, especially with just three days before their next match. His focus is now on keeping the youngsters mentally strong. "It's important to keep them positive and believing in their ability. The opposition is allowed to play well too,

and some nights they will," he said, urging his team to stay fresh and back themselves in the coming games.

Despite the setback, Klusener found a silver lining in his experience of playing in a new city. Having traveled extensively across India for nearly 30 years, he was struck by the vibrant atmosphere. "The spectators were fantastic, the sound system was great, it reminded me of Durban," he said, visibly impressed. "It's beautiful, and I'll be back."

With Hyderabad on the horizon, Klusener's message was clear, score more runs, stand tall under pressure, and trust in the youngsters who will shape the team's future.

## Ashutosh learning batting secrets from Pietersen

## AGENCIES

VISAKHAPATNAM, MAR 25 (UNI)

Young cricketer Ashutosh Sharma has credited England legend Kevin Pietersen for guiding him in the dressing room, saying he frequently discusses batting techniques and experiences with the former great.

Speaking to reporters in post-match press conference on late Monday night, Ashutosh expressed his admiration for Pietersen's presence in the team's camp. "It is great for us to have a legend like him. We get the opportunity to

share the dressing room with him, and I always talk to him about batting and his experiences from his playing days," he said.

In a sensational display of batting prowess, Ashutosh led the Delhi Capitals (DC) to a nail-biting one-wicket victory over the Lucknow Super Giants (LSG) in their opening match of IPL 2025. His unbeaten 66 off 31 balls, including a match-winning six, earned him the Player of the Match award.

Chasing a formidable target of 210, Delhi found themselves in deep trouble at 65 for 5. However,

Ashutosh, coming in as an impact substitute, showcased remarkable composure and aggression. Initially scoring 20 runs off 20 balls, he accelerated dramatically, adding 46 runs in the next 11 deliveries. His innings featured a series of powerful strokes that left the opposition stunned.

Replying to a query, Ashutosh said, "Having played this year, I understand how the wicket behaves in different innings. I know how the situation evolves, and Vizag has been good for me," he explained.

Ashutosh also reflected

on his overall improvement this season, stating that he has made conscious efforts to correct past mistakes. "I have applied myself better this season and implemented what I learned in domestic cricket. I am ensuring that I do not repeat my errors from last year," he said.

Thanking supporters for their encouragement, he added, "I just want to thank the fans for their support." With Pietersen's mentorship and his own domestic experience, the young cricketer is confident of making a stronger impact this season.

## Uncapped NZ duo earn call-ups in Latham-led squad for Pak ODIs

## AGENCIES

DUBAI, MAR 25 (UNI)

Having gained an unsailable lead in the ongoing five-T20I series against Pakistan, the hosts New Zealand have named their squad for the upcoming ODIs.

Tom Latham will take over as skipper in the upcoming three-match ODI series against Pakistan, with white-ball skipper Mitchell Santner missing out, according to an ICC media release.

While eight of the 13 players named in the squad featured in New Zealand's ICC Men's Champions Trophy 2025 squad, multiple fresh faces also earned call-ups for the home side.

Top-order batter Nick Kelly and left-arm pacer Muhammad Abbas, both of whom play for Wellington Firebirds in New Zealand's first-class circuit, have earned their maiden call-ups to the national side.

Rachin Ravindra, Devon Conway, Glenn Phillips and Santner all missed out, given their IPL commitments, while veteran Kane Williamson was unavailable for selection.

Will Young, who forged a century in the opening game of the Champions Trophy against Pakistan, will join Kelly at the top of the order while Daryl Mitchell, Michael Brace-



well and Nathan Smith will form the middle order.

In the bowling department, Will O'Rourke, Jacob Duffy, Nathan Smith and Ben Sears will feature in a four-prong pace attack with both Matt Henry and Kyle Jamieson missing out.

Henry is undergoing rehabilitation from a right shoulder injury, which led to him missing out on featuring in the Champions Trophy Final earlier this month.

Jamieson, meanwhile, has been rested with the selectors managing his workload.

In the spin department, all-rounder Bracewell will be joined by 22-year-old Auckland Aces leg spin-

ner Adi Ashok, who has received his second call-up to the ODI squad, having made his debut against Bangladesh in 2023.

New Zealand will play the first ODI against Pakistan on Saturday, 29 March in Napier.

New Zealand squad: Tom Latham (c), Muhammad Abbas, Adi Ashok, Michael Bracewell, Mark Chapman, Jacob Duffy, Mitch Hay, Nick Kelly, Daryl Mitchell, Will O'Rourke, Ben Sears, Nathan Smith, Will Young

Series schedule: 1st ODI: March 29, McLean Park, Napier, 2nd ODI: April 02, McLean Park, Napier, 3rd ODI: April 05, Bay Oval, Mount Maunganui

## Australia's Brown to miss final T20I against NZ

## AGENCIES

WELLINGTON, MAR 25 (UNI)

Australia have suffered a minor setback with in-form pacer Darcie Brown set to miss the final match of their T20I series against New Zealand due to family reasons.

Brown, who played a crucial role in Australia's victory in the second match of the series at Mount Maunganui by claiming two wickets, has flown home ahead of the third and final game scheduled to be played in Wellington on Wednesday. The visitors have already sealed the series with an unsailable 2-0 lead.

Her absence could pave the way for experienced pacer Megan Schutt to return to the playing XI, having been rested during the second T20I. Additionally, all-rounder Charli Knott, who was drafted into the squad ahead of the second game following Ashleigh Gardner's injury, could be in contention for her international debut.

Knott's inclusion came after Gardner was ruled out of the series with a finger injury, further testing Australia's squad depth. Meanwhile, Brown has been one of the standout performers for the Aussies, having taken three wickets across the first two matches, with Annabel Sutherland leading the wicket-taking charts in the series.

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