



BUDGET SESSION 2025:

## J&K will Get its Statehood Back as Gol is Committed to do so : LG Manoj Sinha

*Says People's Aspirations Should get Reflected in the Form of J&K's Annual Budget*

■ HT News Network

**Jammu, Mar 03:** Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Monday said that Jammu & Kashmir government is steadfast in its commitment to address the legitimate desire of restoration of full statehood of Jammu & Kashmir.

In his address to the Assembly, LG Manoj Sinha, as per news agency—Kashmir News Observer, said that his government is actively engaged with all stakeholders to facilitate restoration of statehood.

"One of the foremost aspirations of the people of Jammu and Kashmir is the restoration of full statehood. My Government remains steadfast in its commitment to addressing this

TURN ON.....PAGE 02



## Govt transforming JK into education hub: LG Sinha

■ HT News Network

**Srinagar, Mar 03:** Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Monday said that the government is focusing on transforming Jammu and Kashmir into an educational hub with strategic investments in higher education.

Addressing the Budget Session of J&K Legislative Assembly here, LG Sinha, according to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), said that the government is transforming the education sector through innovative interventions, including the establishment of smart classrooms, tinkering labs, and digital resources.

"A strong emphasis on skill development, particularly for women and youth, is fostering inclusivity and empowerment. Additionally, to enhance teaching standards and improve

TURN ON.....PAGE 02

## CM Omar Abdullah pays tributes to former PM Dr Manmohan Singh in J&K Legislative Assembly Remembers other former legislators



■ HT News Network

**Jammu, Mar 03:** Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Monday paid rich tributes to former Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh, acknowledging his landmark reforms and pro-people initiatives during his tenure.

The Chief Minister was speaking during the obituary reference in the Budget Session of the J&K Legislative Assembly. Recalling Dr. Singh's contributions to Jammu and Kashmir, the Chief Minister said, "He inherited a complex

TURN ON.....PAGE 02

## LG address endorsement of PM Modi's J&K vision: LOP Sharma Says NC Govt has failed to keep up its promises

■ HT News Network

**Jammu, Mar 03:** Leader of Opposition in Legislative Assembly and senior Bharatiya Janata Party leader, Sunil Sharma on Monday termed the Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha's address to the House as an endorsement of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision towards Jammu and Kashmir.

Sharma while talking to reporters here after the LG's address, according to the news agency— said that they (BJP) were



expecting the manifesto of the government in the

TURN ON.....PAGE 02

## LG's Address in J&K Assembly Triggers Opposition Outcry No Mention of Article 370 Sparks Criticism from PDP, PC

■ HT News Network

**Jammu, Mar 3, :** The first Budget Session of the Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly commenced in Jammu on Monday with an address by Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha. However, the speech quickly drew sharp criticism from opposition parties, particularly for its omission of any

reference to Article 370 and its possible restoration.

People's Democratic Party (PDP) president and former Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti termed the LG's speech as uninspiring and disconnected from the ground realities of Jammu and Kashmir. "This address was no different from his previous speeches on Independence Day or other ceremonial occasions. It failed to acknowledge the disempower-

ment and alienation of the people," she said at a press conference in Srinagar.

Mehbooba pointed out that while the Union Home Minister had assured the restoration of J&K's statehood in Parliament, the concerns of the people extended far beyond that. "The issue is not just about statehood; it is about restoring dignity and the special status that was unilaterally taken away in

TURN ON.....PAGE 02

## After 7 years of bureaucratic rule, J&K budget finally open for debate: G A Mir

■ HT News Network

**Jammu, Mar 03:** As the Jammu and Kashmir Assembly's budget session commenced on Monday, senior Congress leader and former Jammu and Kashmir Pradesh Congress Committee (JKPCC) chief Ghulam Ahmad Mir said that its for the first time in seven years, the budget will be debated



TURN ON.....PAGE 02

## Ramadan: CM Omar calls for market checking to curb overpricing, ensure quality food

Asks DCs to maintain strict vigil on individuals, organizations collecting donations

■ HT News Network

**Srinagar, Mar 03:** The government has passed strict directions to the enforcement agencies, asking them to ensure no overpricing of the essentials in the markets during the month of Ramadan.



As per the record note, accessed by the news agency—, of the meeting held under the chairmanship of the Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on March 1, the Food, Civil Supplies & Consumer Affairs (FCS&CA) and other allied departments have been asked to conduct

TURN ON.....PAGE 02

## ECI Recognises J&K CS Atal Dulloo as 'Exemplary Leader'

■ HT News Network

**Jammu, Mar 03, :** The Election Commission of India (ECI) had recognized the services of Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo, for successful holding of elections for the 18th Lok Sabha in the UT of J&K.

The Chief Secretary, J&K was presented with a 'Certificate of Exemplary Leadership' signed by

the Chief Election Commissioner and two of the Election Commissioners for his excellent service towards successful conduct of the 18th Lok Sabha Elections-2024 in J&K.

This appreciation by the Commission was received by the Chief Secretary for holding of trouble free elections in the UT in which a substantial 58.11% polling was

TURN ON.....PAGE 02

## Govt committed to upgrade healthcare infra across JK: Dy CM

Chairs RKS meeting; reviews functioning, patient care at DH Nowshera

■ HT News Network

**JAMMU, MARCH 3:** Asserting his government's commitment towards upgrading the existing healthcare infrastructure across Jammu and Kashmir, Deputy Chief Minister, Surinder Choudhary, today said that quality health services are being provided to the people with special focus on rural and far flung areas. The Deputy Chief Minister was addressing the officers during a meeting of "Rogi Kalyan Samiti"



TURN ON.....PAGE 02

## Defence Minister Rajnath Singh honours J&K Bank for supporting education of ex-servicemen's children under CSR

■ HT News Network

**Srinagar, Mar 03, :** Union Minister of Defence Rajnath Singh has acknowledged J&K Bank's generous financial contribution under its Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) towards the education of children of ex-servicemen and war widows. During the Armed Forces Flag Day CSR Conclave held today in New Delhi, Defence Minister felicitated the Bank's MD & CEO



Amitava Chatterjee in presence of

other notable contributors.

In his remarks on the occasion, the Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said, "I want to express my gratitude to those who have contributed, for supporting the soldiers of our country, their families, and the brave women with all their hearts. They have provided every kind of support. And I know that in the development of the country, the public sector, as well as the private sector, both have made a

TURN ON.....PAGE 02

## Man gets 1-year imprisonment in cheque bounce case

■ HT News Network

**Srinagar, Mar 03:** A local court in North Kashmir's Bandipora district sentenced a man to 1-year simple imprisonment and Rs 12 lakh fine in a cheque bounce case. According to the details available with the news agency—the Judicial Magistrate 1st Class court Sumbal sentenced Ghulam Hassan Bhat of Kathpora Hajin to 1-year simple imprisonment and directed him to pay a fine of Rs 12 lakh as compensation to the complainant, Bashir Ahmad Dar.

The case was filed under Section 138 of the Negotiable Instruments

TURN ON.....PAGE 02

## Religious clerk booked in Shopian

■ HT News Network

**Srinagar, Mar 03:** S: A religious clerk from Zainapora area has been booked for allegedly making a speech that could incite sectarian disharmony in South Kashmir's Shopian district on Monday.

An official told the news agency—that a local cleric, a resident of Babapora Shopian, had uploaded a video in which he has spoken against the Barelvi sect. The speech allegedly contained content that insulted, spread hatred, and caused emotional harm to another sect, thereby posing a risk of sectarian discord, he said. He has been identified as Mubarak Ahmad Sheikh @ Qasmi son of Ab. Salam Sheikh resident of Babapora

TURN ON.....PAGE 02

## DGP J&K Chairs Crime & Security Review Meeting at PCR Kashmir

■ HT News Network

**Srinagar March 03:** A comprehensive crime and security review meeting was chaired by the Director General of Police (DGP), Nalin Prabhakar IPS, at the Police Control Room (PCR) in Kashmir. The meeting was attended by the IGP Kashmir, Range DIGs, District SSPs from across the Kashmir Zone, JDP ZPHQ, SO to IGP Kashmir, Additional SSPs from all districts, SP PCR Srinagar, and other senior officers. Additionally, the IGP Jammu Zone and senior officers from the Jammu Zone participated virtually.

TURN ON.....PAGE 02

## Snow blankets Kashmir parts, rains lash plains MeT predicts another wet spell from March 10

■ HT News Network

**Srinagar, Mar 03:** The parts of Jammu and Kashmir once again received the fresh snowfall on Monday while the rains lashed the plains, bringing down the mercury further.

According to the news agency—the higher reaches of north and south Kashmir received fresh snowfall today. Srinagar, the summer capital of Jammu and Kashmir, however was lashed by the rains intermittently since the morning.

Sadhna Top and Razdan Top have received a snowfall of one feet while Zojila pass and Sonamarg have received a snowfall of 10 inches today, said an Independent Weather Forecaster, Aadil Maqbool.



As per the details, Gulmarg recorded a snowfall of 8 inches while Doodhpatri recorded 7 inches of snow. Peer ki Gali recorded 8 inches of snow while Sinthan top recorded 10 inches of snowfall till today, he said, adding that light snow was also reported in some plains of Shopian, Baramulla, Kupwara and Bandipora.

Director Meteorological department (MeT), Dr Mukhtar Ahmad said that the generally dry weather is expected from tomorrow till March 09, adding that a fresh spell of rain and snow is expected from March 10 to 12.

Moreover, the MeT has issued an advisory, predicting a possibility of landslides, rockfall, shooting stones and mudslides over vulnerable places.

It advised the tourists, travellers and transporters to follow administration

TURN ON.....PAGE 02





CONTINUE FROM FRONT PAGE.....

LG

legitimate desire of the citizens of Jammu and Kashmir," he said, adding that his government recognizes the emotional and political significance of the Statehood for the people and is actively engaging with all stakeholders to facilitate this process in a manner that ensures peace, stability, and progress.

The LG said the Government is committed to preserving the unity in diversity that defines Jammu and Kashmir.

"We take immense pride in our composite culture and centuries-old traditions of amity and brotherhood. My Government is committed to preserving the unity in diversity that defines Jammu and Kashmir. It is firmly committed to maintaining peace and harmony, ensuring that the aspirations of our people are protected from divisive influences and cultivating an inclusive society built on mutual respect and harmony, paving the path to a prosperous and peaceful future," he said.

Sinha said that his Government is committed to strengthening Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) and urban Local Bodies (ULBs) by ensuring timely elections at all levels.

He said the move will enhance grassroots democracy, promote citizen participation in decision-making and empower local governance for more effective development.

The LG said his government has ensured an adequate resource envelope for Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs), enabling them to undertake sustainable and inclusive development in their respective areas.

"This commitment empowers local governance, strengthens grassroots democracy, and accelerates holistic regional growth," he said.

Sinha also said that reservation of seats for other Backward Classes in Panchayats, Municipalities and Municipal Corporations have been also granted.

"Reservation of seats in the Legislative Assembly of Jammu and Kashmir has been granted by the Government to the persons belonging to Scheduled Tribes," he said, adding that persons residing in areas adjoining International Border have been given benefits of reservation by the Government, at par with residents of LoC Areas.

"Paddari tribe', Pahari Ethnic Group, 'Gadda Brahmin' and 'Koli' have been included as Scheduled Tribes. Valmiki Community has also been included in SC category," he added.

The LG said the government is committed to the dignified rehabilitation of Kashmiri migrants back into the Valley by ensuring a safe and secure environment.

"Efforts will be intensified to accelerate the construction of transit accommodation projects for migrant employees, providing them with suitable housing at designated locations. These initiatives reflect our dedication to restoring confidence, fostering inclusivity, and ensuring a stable and prosperous future for all communities in Jammu and Kashmir," he said.

Talking about 2025-26 budget, Sinha said that it is a testament to the aspirations of the masses, reflecting their hopes for a brighter future.

"This budget carries historic significance as it is the first in over seven years to be presented by an elected government in Jammu and Kashmir. It symbolizes the people's power, as it is prepared by the representatives chosen by the people themselves. This budget is not merely a financial document; it is a testament to the aspirations of the masses, reflecting their hopes for a brighter future!" he said.

He said for the first time, the Chief Minister has personally chaired meetings for all twenty districts, separately, engaging directly with elected representatives to understand their aspirations, regional needs, and development priorities in Budget formulation.

"The voices of the people are again shaping the allocation of resources and the prioritization of development goals. This budget is a true celebration of democracy—an expression of the dreams and expectations of every household, every community, and every region of Jammu and Kashmir. It marks a moment of renewal and empowerment, where the collective efforts of the people's representatives are shaping the future of this land," he said.

He said the budget represents a new era of participatory governance, ensuring that the needs and aspirations of the common man remain at the heart of policy making.

The LG said the Government remains fully committed to implementing its promises made to the people, as a representation of the people's aspirations for further political empowerment, and for creating an enabling environment for employment, sustainable development, social inclusiveness and expansion of the economy for enhancing the overall quality of life.

"It will work relentlessly on the three principles of Economy, Ecology and Equity that will shape our future. We commit ourselves to this balance for a better and brighter future for all," he said.

He said good governance remains the cornerstone of a prosperous and harmonious future for Jammu and Kashmir.

"My Government remains firmly committed to transparent and accountable decision

making, ensuring the efficient and effective allocation of resources so that the people of Jammu and Kashmir fully benefit from every penny spent," he said.

He added that innovative initiatives such as digital governance, streamlined public service delivery, effective grievance redressal, and the promotion of socio-economic programs are designed to bridge developmental gaps and strengthen public trust.

The LG said his government's interventions will prioritize youth, women, and farmers, striving to make Jammu and Kashmir a progressive and inclusive economy.

"With unity and a shared commitment, it will work towards the welfare of every section of society, especially the poor and marginalized," he said.

The LG said the infrastructure development remains a key driver of progress, with significant advancements in connectivity.

"The recent inauguration of the Sonamarg Tunnel (Z-Morh) by the Hon'ble Prime Minister, along with the completion of two segments of the Jammu-Srinagar National Highway (Banihal Bypass and Ramban Bypass), has substantially reduced travel time," he said.

He said his government is committed to fast-tracking major connectivity projects by streamlining land acquisition, securing forest clearances, and addressing encroachment issues.

"Ongoing projects, including the Expressway, National Highways, and Ring Roads for Jammu and Srinagar, will be accelerated to ensure their timely completion," he said.

The LG said the Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla Rail Link

(USBRL) project will integrate J&K more closely with the rest of India.

"The Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla Rail Link (USBRL) project has reached a historic milestone with the completion of its final segment, poised to transform connectivity and development in Jammu and Kashmir, integrating Jammu and Kashmir more closely with the rest of the nation," he said—(KNO)

EDUCATION

educational outcomes," he said.

"My government is prioritizing capacity building of 38 programs for educators, ensuring a more dynamic and effective learning environment," the Lieutenant Governor said.

The LG said that Vidhya Samiksha Kendra is being operationalized for data driven decision making and improved educational outcomes. "Real time recording of student's attendance and tracking of teacher attendance have also been introduced," he added.

"The government is committed to strengthening the infrastructure of colleges and universities, ensuring adequate faculty and staff to enhance the quality of higher education. As part of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, special emphasis will be placed on advancing research facilities for both faculty and students," LG Sinha said.

The Lieutenant Governor said that additionally, innovation, incubation, and entrepreneurship will be actively encouraged to foster a start-up culture among students, equipping them with the skills and opportunities to drive economic growth and self-reliance.

"My government is focusing on transforming Jammu and Kashmir into an educational hub with strategic investments in higher education. IIT Jammu and IIM Jammu are now operational," LG Sinha said.

He also said that the Jammu University has attained A++ status, while the Islamic University of Science and Technology (IUST) leads in skill development and innovation. "Faculty from the University of Kashmir are recognized among the top 2 percent of global scientists by Stanford University."

The Lieutenant Governor said, "Institutions like Cluster University of Jammu and IUST are contributing to high impact research and securing patents."—(KNO)

LOP

speech. "We were expecting the address will mention the things promised by the government, but it was Narendra Modi's vision. Whatever PM Modi has promised, this has been endorsed by the government," he said.

Sharma added that National Conference rule is about to complete six months but the government has "failed to fulfil its promises," adding that the "this dispensation has been doing nothing and instead the ministers have been creating hurdles in the developmental works that were started earlier."

About the constructive opposition, he said that have apprised the Speaker that nobody should be allowed to talk about unconstitutional, anti-national things. "We will not allow such talks and will oppose it tooth and nail," he added.

About MLA Langate Sheikh Khurshid's protest, Sunil condemned the protest and said that the MLA had to send the picture to his village and nothing else—(KNO)

CM

and difficult situation, yet he chose the path of dialogue and reconciliation. His efforts brought us closer to resolving long-standing

issues than at any other time in recent history." Referring to the unrest in 2010, CM Omar Abdullah highlighted Dr. Singh's role in addressing the crisis and restoring normalcy. "His commitment to the rehabilitation of Kashmiri Pandits was unwavering. Under his leadership, steps were taken to facilitate their return, including the establishment of townships like Jagti and the PM Package for employment," he said.

Speaking on the occasion, the Chief Minister, who is also the Leader of the House, noted that just four months ago, the Assembly had paid tribute to former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee, and today, they gathered once again to mourn the loss of another statesman—Dr. Manmohan Singh.

"Dr. Singh was a man of great wisdom and integrity. He never used the power of his office for personal gain," he said, adding that Dr. Singh's journey—from studying under streetlights to earning degrees from Oxford and Cambridge—was a testament to his dedication and intellect. "His rise from an economic advisor to Planning Commission Deputy Chairman, Finance Minister, and eventually the Prime Minister of India was marked by success at every step," he added. Reflecting on Dr. Singh's economic reforms, CM Omar Abdullah recalled how he took charge as Finance Minister when the country was in dire economic straits.

"India lacked the financial resources even to run the government. It was his vision and policies that paved the way for economic reforms, transforming India from a struggling economy to one of the world's largest. The economic liberalization he spearheaded, including the dismantling of the license-permit raj, unleashed the potential of the private sector and set India on a path of sustained growth," he said.

The Chief Minister also highlighted Dr. Singh's contributions beyond economic reforms. "His government initiated crucial social welfare measures, including the Indira Awas Yojana, which provided housing for the poor, and MGNREGA, which ensured employment for millions."

Acknowledging Dr. Singh's contributions to J&K's infrastructure development, the Chief Minister said, "The Jammu-Srinagar Highway, a critical lifeline for the region, was initiated under his tenure. The Chenab Rail Bridge, the highest railway bridge in the world, was another testament to his commitment to connecting Kashmir with the rest of India. Though he did not live to see the first train cross that bridge, its completion remains a tribute to his vision." Recalling Dr. Singh's last press conference, CM Omar Abdullah quoted him as saying, "History will be a better judge of me than contemporary times."

He remarked, "Today, as we reflect on his legacy, we recognize the wisdom in those words. He was a leader respected not only in India but across the world—from Washington to London, from Tokyo to Beijing."

Sharing his personal experience, the Chief Minister said, "I had the privilege of working closely with Dr. Singh and learning from his quiet yet resolute leadership. He never raised his voice, never sought attention, and never hesitated to correct a mistake when needed." He concluded by stating that "His absence leaves a void, but his contributions will continue to shape India for generations to come."

The Chief Minister also paid rich tributes to other former legislators during the obituary reference. islator R S Pathania dropping hints about possible NC, BJP alliance, according to the news, said,

"We are not talking about

PDP

August 2019," she added.

The LG's address did touch upon statehood, stating, "One of the foremost aspirations of the people of Jammu and Kashmir is the restoration of full statehood. My government remains steadfast in addressing this legitimate desire through dialogue with stakeholders to ensure peace, stability, and progress." However, this did little to placate the opposition.

Sajad Gani Lone, president of the People's Conference (PC) and MLA from Handwara, was equally scathing in his criticism. Taking to X (formerly Twitter), Lone remarked that the LG's speech "sounded like a BJP manifesto." He expressed disappointment over the complete absence of references to Article 370, Article 35A, or the Reorganisation Act. "The National Conference-led government has now dropped even the pretense of standing for Article 370. This address was indistinguishable from a BJP government's statement," he posted.

Mehbooba also lashed out at the National Conference (NC), accusing it of capitulating to the BJP's agenda. "People gave NC a decisive mandate, but instead of standing up for J&K's rights, they have chosen silence over the abrogation of Article 370," she said.

Lone echoed this sentiment, highlighting what he called a glaring ideological shift within the NC. "During the election campaign, NC's entire narrative revolved around Article 370, painting others as BJP's proxies. Now, the same party refuses to even acknowledge its existence," he said.

Beyond the Article 370 debate, Lone was critical of the broader vision—or lack thereof—presented in the LG's speech. "If this address

was meant to outline the government's roadmap, it is as directionless as it can get. It was nothing more than a bureaucratic report without any fresh political, social, or economic initiatives," he remarked.

He warned that the absence of political leadership in governance would result in an administration dominated by bureaucrats. "The last administration was run by bureaucrats, and it seems this one will be no different. There is no political vision, no fresh approach, and no creativity in governance," Lone stated.

The ongoing Budget Session, the first since Jammu and Kashmir became a Union Territory in 2019, will see Chief Minister Omar Abdullah presenting the budget statement, marking a shift from previous years when the Union Finance Minister tabled the region's budget in Parliament. The session, spanning 22 sittings, is expected to witness intense debates over governance, political representation, and the region's future trajectory. [KNT]

MIR

in a democratic setup rather than bureaucrats deciding it behind the closed doors .

"For seven years, democracy was absent. Budgets were passed behind closed doors by bureaucrats, with no representation from elected leaders. Now, after all these years, the budget will be debated, and the voices of the people will finally be heard," Mir, who is also the leader of the Congress Legislature Party told the House.

Mir, according to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), acknowledged key points from the LG's speech, highlighting the assurance on statehood and the commitment to addressing public grievances. "People will listen to their issues being raised, and debated under the camera observation," he added.

Mir said that the Assembly session is an important opportunity for elected representatives to raise public concerns, including employment issues, inflation, and essential services like food, water, and gas—(KNO)

ECI

recorded for the first time for the general elections held here since 1989 across the districts of the UT. The same was over 14% more than that of the elections of 2019 during which the overall percentage of polling was just around 44% across the districts of the UT.

Pertinent to mention here that these were the first general elections of the J&K after its reorganization in the year 2019. A total of 87,26,281 voters were eligible to exercise their franchise in these elections. For this purpose, 11,629 polling stations had been established and 80,724 polling personnel had been trained and made available to ECI for holding of elections across the villages and towns of J&K.

Moreover, for the first time administration had established 83 women manned, 70 youth manned, 73 PwD manned, 88 Green Polling Stations, 180 Border Polling Stations, 152 Model Polling Stations and 46 Unique Polling Stations under specific themes in all districts of Jammu & Kashmir. These were aimed to revolutionize the electoral process by ensuring accessibility and representation for all segments of society.

With a special focus on women, youth and Persons with Disabilities these stations were equipped with amenities tailored to meet their unique needs, fostering an environment conducive for their active participation in the democratic process. (ANB)

DYCM

(RKS) held to review the functioning and patient care facilities available at Sub District Hospital, Nowshera, here today.

On the occasion, the Deputy Chief Minister, who is also the Chairman "Rogi Kalyan Samiti" was apprised of the progress and performance registered by the SDH under different indicators and financial allocation under RKS.

A brief discussion was held on various services including Maternity and Child Health Services, referral services, Ayushman Bharat, ABHA card status, services under JSY, ambulance service besides status of Hospital's civil works.

BMO Nowshera gave a detailed presentation regarding the facilities, functioning and activities proposed under RKS 2024-25 for infrastructure up-gradation and overall advancement of healthcare system in the Hospital

The Deputy Chief Minister directed the concerned authorities to work on various necessities vital for upgrading the basic infrastructure in the hospital. He directed the BMO to submit a detailed list of department wise requirements so that measures are taken with respect to the facility upgradation of the hospital accordingly.

He directed all the concerned to follow the objectives as envisaged in RKS guidelines. He asked the officials of health department to work with added zeal and dedication to ensure efficient and prompt healthcare facilities to the people.

Among others the meeting was attended by ADC Nowshera, Babu Ram Tandon, BMO, Executive Engineers of Jal Shakti and R&B,

EO, representatives from civil society and other members.

RAJNATH

major contribution."

J&K Bank has contributed a significant amount to the Armed Forces Flag Day Fund (AFFDF) as part of its Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) program. Managed by the Kendriya Sainik Board (KSB) under the Ministry of Defence, the AFFDF provides welfare assistance to families of armed forces veterans across India.

Commenting on the felicitation, MD & CEO Amitava Chatterjee said, "At J&K Bank, we firmly believe in the power of education to transform lives, and this contribution is a small gesture of gratitude towards our armed forces who have dedicated their lives to the nation. We remain committed to supporting education and community welfare through our CSR initiatives."

By supporting this initiative, the Bank reaffirms its commitment to the welfare of those who have served the nation. This contribution aligns with the Bank's CSR focus on education and community upliftment, ensuring financial support for the children of soldiers' families. (ANB)

WEATHER

and traffic advisory and asked farmers to suspend irrigation & other farm operations till 4th March.

Avoid sloppy & avalanche prone areas, it reads—(KNO)

MAN

Act (NI Act) by the complainant in 2017, alleging that Bhat had issued a cheque that was dishonored due to insufficient funds.

The court, after hearing arguments from both sides, found Bhat guilty and convicted him under Section 138 of the NI Act.

During the sentencing arguments, Bhat's counsel requested the court to take a lenient view, arguing that the offence was financial in nature and did not involve moral turpitude or public safety concerns.

The defence cited Supreme Court rulings that emphasize compensation over punitive punishment in such cases. The counsel argued that the main objective of the law was to ensure the complainant received the due amount rather than imposing imprisonment.

On the other hand, the complainant's counsel urged the court to impose a strict sentence, citing financial loss, legal expenses, and mental distress suffered by the complainant.

It was argued that a lenient approach would weaken the law's intent, which is to maintain financial discipline in commercial transactions.

The complainant's lawyer further argued that Bhat had been given several opportunities to clear his dues but failed to do so.

The court, after examining the case, found that a balance was needed to be struck between deterrence and compensation. While the maximum sentence was not deemed necessary, the court ruled that merely imposing a fine would not serve the purpose of justice.

Bhat was sentenced to one-year simple imprisonment and ordered to pay Rs 12 lakh as compensation to Dar.

The court further directed that Bhat be lodged in District Jail Pulwama to serve his sentence—(KNO)

PSA

Zainapora Shopian.

"Taking cognizance of the matter, the police have registered a case against the cleric while investigations have been set into motion," he added—(KNO)

DGP

The main focus of the meeting was to assess the current security situation and evaluate the effectiveness of crime management strategies across the region. During the meeting, the DGP emphasized the need for enhanced inter-district collaboration to strengthen law enforcement and security operations. He highlighted the importance of a proactive approach to crime prevention and urged the district SSPs to adopt community-based strategies to address criminal activities.

The district SSPs presented detailed briefings, outlining the law enforcement and public safety challenges in their respective jurisdictions. Furthermore, the DGP issued directives for the swift investigation and resolution of long-pending criminal cases. The IGP Kashmir Zone also urged officers to adopt a proactive stance in addressing serious crimes and to collaborate closely with the judiciary and prosecution to expedite case resolutions. The DGP also emphasized the significance of building public trust through active community engagement, noting that strong relationships with the public are crucial for both crime prevention and fostering cooperation with law enforcement efforts.

The meeting concluded with the DGP expressing confidence in the Jammu and Kashmir Police's ability to meet these challenges. He reaffirmed the department's commitment to maintaining law and order, ensuring public safety, and safeguarding the rights of the citizens in Jammu and Kashmir.





## DC Srinagar reviews progress on implementation of Mission Yuva

### Underscores roles & responsibilities of SBDUs, BHDs

■ HT News Network

SRINAGAR, MARCH 03: To review the progress on implementation of Mission Yuva, a meeting was chaired by Deputy Commissioner (DC) Srinagar, Dr Bilal Mohi-Ud-Din Bhat here at Meeting Hall of the DC Office Complex, today.

At the outset, the DC discussed the different aspects with regard to the constitution of Small Business Development Units (SBDUs) and Business Help Desks (BHDs) under Mission YUVA.

Dr Bilal emphasized the need for seamless coordination among the Departments to provide holistic support to Nano-Enterprises and MSMEs.

He said that the initiative is a significant step towards boosting self-employment and entrepreneurial initiatives under Mission YUVA in Srinagar district.

During the meeting, Deputy Director Employment through a Power-Point presentation highlighted the formation, roles, and responsibilities of BDUs and BHDs, ensuring their effective implementation to support entrepreneurship, financial facilitation, and business development in the district.

All stakeholders actively participated in the deliberations, highlighting



ing their respective roles in strengthening the business support ecosystem at the district and sub-division levels.

Besides, Additional Deputy Commissioner, Syed Ahmad Kataria; Chief Planning Officer, Fayaz Ahmad Dar and Deputy Director Employment, Dr Sheeba, the meeting was attended by Sectoral/ District Officers and all members of SBDUs and BHDs. At the outset, the DC discussed the different aspects with regard to the constitution of Small Business Development Units (SBDUs) and Business Help Desks (BHDs) under Mission YUVA.

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All stakeholders actively participated in the deliberations, highlighting their respective roles in strengthening the business support ecosystem at the district and sub-division levels.

## Ramadan: Fluctuation prices of dates in Sgr, elsewhere; consumers bear the brunt

### FCS&CA officials admit inability to enforce price controls

■ HT News Network

Srinagar, Mar 03 (KNO): On the second day of the holy month of Ramadan, the demand for dates has surged across Kashmir, triggering a price war between vendors and shopkeepers in Srinagar and elsewhere in the valley. With enforcement agencies missing in action, consumers are left at the mercy of fluctuating rates.

Despite government claims of price regulation, multiple vendors in Srinagar and other places continue to sell dates at varying rates. While shopkeepers call their stock the "best dates with all premium varieties", smaller vendors claim to offer better deals. Among them, a local Kashmiri found himself struggling with multiple prices.

A street vendor at Lal Chowk's bustling market told the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) that big shops charge extra for their name, while they offer the same dates at better prices.

A shop owner just a few steps away claimed their dates are of "premium quality" and are sourced from the best regions, ensuring top quality at reasonable rates.

Consumers, meanwhile, remain caught in the middle with fluctuating prices. "There is no uniform pricing. Every shopkeeper is charging as



per their will," said Adil Ahmad, a shopper in Srinagar. He said the government only makes hollow promises and there is no one to check the prices in the market.

Another shopper urged the government to intervene and ensure proper price checks instead of making empty promises from their offices.

"Whenever an official from any department visits the market, they are accompanied by a group of media persons who outnumber the officials. We don't understand if they are here for an inspection or just for publicity," said a resident from Rajbagh, requesting anonymity.

Earlier, KNO reported on public

demands for price regulation ahead of Ramadan and highlighted fears of skyrocketing rates for essential commodities, including mutton, poultry and vegetables.

Officials from the Food, Civil Supplies, and Consumer Affairs (FCS&CA) Department admitted their inability to act. "We too are consumers and are witnessing the soaring prices in the market, but we are helpless," an official told KNO earlier.

An official from the FCS&CA department, wishing anonymity, told KNO that they want to act against the price variations, but the government has left them powerless.

## SBI RSETI Ramban inaugurates 30-Day Women's Tailoring Training Program

■ HT News Network

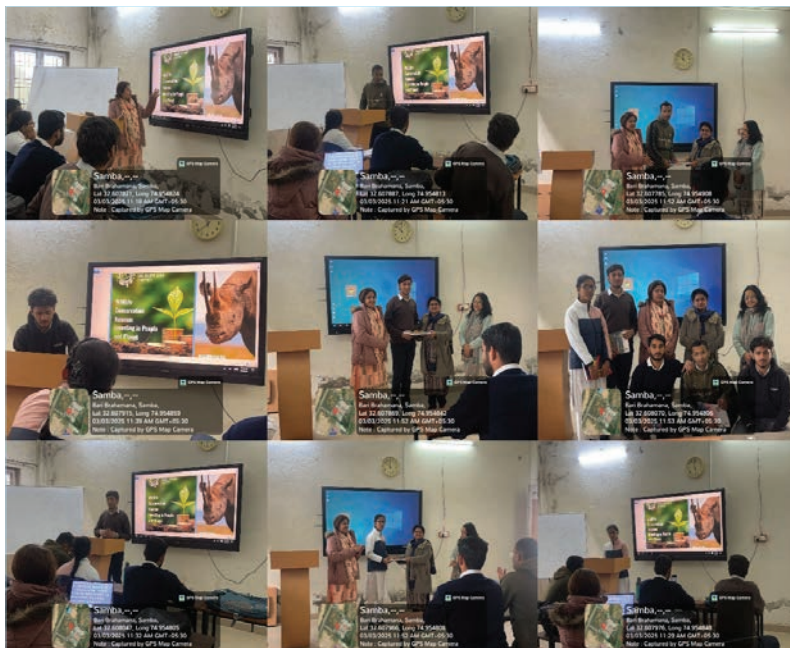
RAMBAN, MARCH 3: SBI Rural Self Employment Training Institute (RSETI) Ramban inaugurated a new batch of its 30-day Women's Tailoring Training Program at the RSETI campus. A total of 30 enthusiastic candidates have enrolled in the program, aiming to acquire valuable tailoring skills for self-employment and entrepreneurship.

The inauguration ceremony was graced by Khursheed Ahmed Malik, Lead District Manager (LDM), Ramban, who attended as the Chief Guest. He emphasised the importance of skill development in empowering women and encouraged participants to utilize this opportunity for financial independence. Director RSETI Ramban, S. Harvinder Singh, welcomed the participants and provided a comprehensive overview of the training program and RSETI's mission. He highlighted how such skill-based programs align with government initiatives to promote self-employment and entrepreneurship among women.

During the event, the Director elaborated on the structured 30-day curriculum, which will cover various aspects of tailoring, including cutting, stitching, designing and finishing techniques. He also spoke about the financial and entrepreneurial support available to trainees post-completion, including linkages with government schemes like PMEGP, Mudra Yojana and NRLM, to help them establish their businesses.

## Govt. Degree College Vijaypur celebrates World Wildlife Day 2025.

SAMBA, MARCH 3: Department of Environmental Sciences and Eco Club of Government Degree College Vijaypur celebrated World Wildlife Day 2025 with a seminar focused on the theme "Wildlife Conservation Finance: Investing in People and Planet." The event aimed to raise awareness about the importance of wildlife conservation and the need to protect our planet's biodiversity. Poonam Kundan (Head, Department of Environmental Sciences and Convent Eco Club), delivered an insightful presentation elaborating on the significance of the theme for 2025. She emphasised the interconnectedness of all living beings and the vital role that wildlife plays in maintaining ecological balance. Her discussion included various threats faced by wildlife, such as habitat loss, climate change and poaching and highlighted the importance of collective action in conserving our natural heritage. Dr. Vandana Verma, Principal of GDC Vijaypur, also shared her views during the seminar. She underscored the role of educational institutions in promoting environmental awareness and encouraged students to engage in sustainable practices that benefit both wildlife and communities.



Students of the college actively participated in the Seminar. First position was achieved by Rupaank Aryan of BA Semester VI, Second position was attained by Amjad Hussain of BSc. Semester IV and third position was secured by Ranjit Kaur of B.Sc. Semester IV. Consolation prizes were awarded to Avijeet Kumar and Vishal Shar-

ma of B.Sc. Semester IV. Principal of the college, Dr. Vandana Verma appreciated the efforts of the students for their active participation. The whole event was coordinated by Poonam Kundan (HOD Environmental Sciences). Prizes and certificates were awarded to winners and all participants.

## Distt Admin Srinagar bids warm farewell to outgoing ADDC Ghulam Hassan Sheikh

■ HT News Network

SRINAGAR, MARCH 03: The District Administration Srinagar today organized a function at Meeting Hall of DC Office Complex, here to honour and bid warm farewell to the outgoing Additional District Development Commissioner (ADDC) Srinagar, Ghulam Hassan Sheikh who has been transferred and posted as Secretary to J&K Board of School Education.

Deputy Commissioner Srinagar, Dr. Bilal Mohi-Ud-Din Bhat presided over the function. While Chief Planning Officer, SDM East, besides other senior Officers of District Administration were present in the farewell function.

Speaking on the occasion, the Deputy Commissioner Srinagar extended his best wishes to the outgoing Officer for his future endeavours to serve the public. He lauded the passion and dedication of the Officer in enhancing public services, and promoting sustainable development in Srinagar District. The outgoing ADDC in his address expressed his gratitude to the Officers and officials of the District Administration Srinagar for their active support and cooperation.

## Dalgate Bridge Shows Signs of Structural Distress, Immediate Inspection Needed

■ HT News Network

Srinagar, Mar 3, KNT: The Dalgate Bridge over Chunth-Kul on the Khanyar-Hazratbal Road in the Kashmir capital Srinagar has shown alarming signs of structural distress, raising concerns about its stability and potential hazards for commuters. Experts have been urged to conduct an immediate structural assessment as visible gaps in the bridge's columns and footpath indicate possible deterioration.

This pile-founded viaduct with trestle-type piers as per the news agency Kashmir News Trust (KNT) has developed noticeable gaps between its columns, a sign of progressive structural displacement that could compromise its load-bearing capacity. Additionally, the 1.5-meter-wide footpath has developed visible fractures at multiple locations, further fueling fears among pedestrians and motorists. Commuters have also reported significant vibrations while crossing the bridge, suggesting possible dynamic instability.

Constructed at a cost of Rs 13.38 crore, the bridge was completed five months ahead of schedule by JKPC and inaugurated in 2012 by then Chief Minister Omar Abdullah. However, with over a decade of service, concerns are mounting that without expert intervention, the bridge could deteriorate further, leading to a catastrophic failure.

Structural engineers and bridge safety experts have been urged to inspect and evaluate the bridge for potential shear failure, settlement issues, or material fatigue. "If left unchecked, the progressive widening of column gaps may compromise the integrity of the entire superstructure, posing a severe public safety risk."

Concerned citizens are calling on the authorities to act before a structural collapse turns into a disaster. [KNT]

## Panchayat/Village-Level awareness campaign against drug abuse continues to receive overwhelming response across district Kishtwar

KISHTWAR, MARCH 03: As part of an ongoing Information, Education and Communication (IEC) campaign launched by the District Administration Kishtwar to combat the growing issue of drug abuse, today saw an overwhelming response from all segments of society across Block Drabshalla, Block Bunjwah, Block Palmar, Block Thakrie and Block Trigam.

The initiative, spearheaded by Deputy Commissioner Rajesh Kumar Shavan, has generated significant enthusiasm and community participation.

This grassroots-level initiative seeks to educate the public about the harmful effects of substance abuse and engage local communities in the fight against addiction. The campaign focuses on raising awareness and mobilising action to address the issue effectively.

To ensure continuous engagement, awareness programs are being held every Monday across panchayats, with active participation from local residents, students and community leaders. Various desig-

nated officers and nodal agencies have organised activities today, where a series of IEC programs took place aimed at spreading awareness among the participants.

The day's events included speeches by speakers, distribution of informational pamphlets, public announcements and sharing success stories of individuals who have overcome addiction, as well as discussions on the socio-legal consequences of substance abuse.

The events emphasised the importance of building a "Nasha Mukta" (drug-free) society, encouraging youth to take an active role in educating others about the dangers of drug abuse. The administration's ongoing efforts to tackle the problem through consistent information-sharing and community involvement were highlighted throughout the programs.

The events were attended by civil administration officials, students, teachers and various dignitaries.





EDITORIAL

Ensure everything is smooth during holy month of Ramadan

Since the holy month of Ramadan began on Sunday one can expect that the union territory government will swing into action and ensure that all the necessary arrangements are in place during this holy month. Couple of days back chief minister Omar Abdullah chaired a meeting to review the arrangements made for the holy month of Ramadan. Necessary directions were issued to the concerned officers so that the people don't experience any problem during Ramadan.

Holding meetings and issuance of directions is a good step but it has to be followed by subsequent steps. It is important that the government plays a proactive role and keeps its eyes and ears open when it comes to managing the affairs during this holy month. Basic facilities like water and electricity need to be made available to the people and there should not be any compromise in this regard. At the same time the administration should also focus on the price regulation in the market.

Over the years it has been observed that as and when the holy month of Ramadan knocks at the door of the people the price mechanism goes for a huge six. Prices of vegetables, fruits, milk and other basic things see a surge and the situation somewhat goes out of control. Prices of mutton and chicken also see an upward trend and the administration seems to have surrendered to the profiteers. The profiteers and the hoarders make merry of the situation and while earning quick bucks they push the common masses to the hilt.

There is a general notion among the people that the checking squad of the consumer affairs department carries out its task in the first few days of the holy month of Ramadan and during the remaining part of the month the squad is invisible. This trend needs to be stopped and it should be ensured that the checking squad is alive and kicking during the entire month. In fact the checking squad should carry out its activities during the whole year.

As the budget session of the Jammu & Kashmir legislative assembly is in progress at Jammu it is quite natural that the chief minister and his cabinet colleagues would be stationed there. In such a scenario the onus lies on the divisional administration of Kashmir and they need to pull up their socks. The divisional administration should take all the steps so that the holy month of Ramadan culminates to the satisfaction of the common masses.

Ramadan

ADAM OMAR

Ramadan is here,  
so lets all fast,  
it's the ninth month of the year,  
lets make it last.  
When you see the Ramadan Moon,  
up in the sky so bright,  
you need to get ready,  
to pray all throughout the night.  
Now that lsha has passed,  
lets get up in congregation,  
to pray Taraweeh,  
with the Muslim nation.  
Ramadan is here,  
so lets all fast,  
it's the ninth month of the year,  
lets make it last.  
The first ten days are upon us,  
so we need to avoid what's wrong,  
keep good intentions,  
all day long.  
It's the middle days now  
when there's things to buy and your phone rings,  
don't let these worldly matters,  
distract you from doing the right things.  
Ramadan is here,  
so lets all fast,  
it's the ninth month of the year,  
lets make it last.  
Now it's the last ten days,  
lets stay in the mosque for long,  
lets do may good deeds,  
and avoid what is wrong.  
Lal a tul Qadr is upon us,  
it's the Night of Power,  
let's start praying the Allah (Subhanawataallah),  
throughout the night for every hour.  
Ramadan is here,  
so lets all fast,  
it's the ninth month of the year,  
lets make it last.  
Ramadan isn't forever,  
so lets do what is right,  
avoid doing bad,  
with all our might.  
Ramadan is here,  
so lets all fast,  
it's the ninth month of the year,  
lets make it last.

Is Ignorance Bliss for a Muslim? The danger of fake spiritual guides and the need for awareness

DR FIAZ MAQBOOL FAZILI

Ignorance is darkness, and knowledge is Noor (enlightenment) in Islam. The Quran guides believers to the best path and brings good news to those who lead a righteous life, ensuring them a great recompense. For the vision of effective Islamic education, one must strive to learn before ignorance manifests as a destructive trait of arrogance in speech, writing, and behaviour

Today, when we refer to an ignorant person, it does not mean someone is entirely unintelligent (though being completely dumb can be considered a general form of ignorance–lol!). Instead, it means lacking knowledge in a certain field of life, especially regarding the faith one follows. Allah, the Almighty, has prescribed ordinances that should not be neglected. He has outlined certain limits that should not be transgressed and has forbidden actions that are inviolable.

If a believer lacks correct religious knowledge, the probability of straying from the righteous path is high. Such a person can easily be misled by Satan toward unlawful acts. However, if one is blessed with the light of knowledge, they will not deviate. They will also be able to identify and avoid the dangerous paths of Kufr, Shirk, and immorality that may cross their lives.

Whenever a deceptive guide approaches, a brief interaction with them will be enough to establish that they are not a guide to follow. Anyone who misinterprets the Holy Scripture or claims to have private "revelations" that contradict the Quran and Sunnah can never be a saint, even if they claim to perform miracles such as fortune-telling, healing the sick,

or transforming base metals into gold.

With a growing number of fake faith healers disguising themselves as spiritual guides (Pirs), it is crucial to ask:

- How can one differentiate between a true saint and a fraud?
- How can an uneducated or less-informed individual identify an imposter?

The Reality of Fake Pirs and the Need for Awareness

The issue of faith healing has been a subject of misunderstanding and distortion due to the following:

A lack of understanding of fundamental Islamic beliefs (Aqeedah).

The misconduct of impostors who exploit people's vulnerabilities.

Islam provides clear standards for faith and spirituality based on the teachings of the Quran and Sunnah–the way of life prescribed for Muslims by Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). While many noble and righteous spiritual healers (Aamil) exist, there is also an illegitimate and fraudulent approach to faith healing that misguides people and leads them away from Islam.

Many so-called charismatic preachers exploit people's trust (Aqeedah) for their own benefit. Perilous times teach us valuable lessons–many individuals fall prey to false doctrines and fraudulent teachers. Upon careful investigation, one can always find flaws that expose these impostors.

The Menace of Fake Pirs in Kashmir

In many parts of the world, particularly in Kashmir, the

menace of fake Pirs (spiritual guides) has had devastating consequences for individuals, families, and society. These self-proclaimed saints claim to possess miraculous powers but, in reality, exploit people's faith, emotions, and vulnerabilities.

Despite advancements in education, even well-educated individuals fall prey to such impostors, highlighting a critical gap in awareness about true Islamic principles and the need for vigilance against deception.

Identifying a True Mutaqee Momin (Pious Believer)

A true Mutaqee Momin is one who strictly follows the Quran and Sunnah. Islam provides clear guidelines on how a righteous person should conduct themselves. A true spiritual guide should:

Perform obligatory prayers (Salah) regularly.

Follow the principles of modesty, including Haya and Hijab.

Lead a life in accordance with the Quran and Hadith.

Encourage righteous deeds and abstain from immoral acts.

The credibility of any spiritual leader can be measured by their Ikhlas (sincerity) in following the Quran and Sunnah and their Taqwa (piety) in actual life.

"The most honourable people among you in the sight of Allah are those who have Taqwa (fear of Allah)." (Quran)

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said: "I have left among you two matters; if you hold fast to them, you shall never be misguided: the Book of Allah and the Sunnah."

By applying such key indicators, one can distinguish between a genuine scholar and a fraud without alerting the person being evaluated.

The Exploitation by Fake Pirs

Fake pirs often engage in acts that contradict Islamic teachings, such as drug abuse, acting in a mentally unstable manner, walking around nude, and exploiting people's faith and desperation.

Yet, many continue to follow them blindly, believing in their so-called miracles and magical powers. This blind faith leads to spiritual, psychological, and physical harm.

One of the most tragic aspects of following fake pirs is the exploitation of innocent individuals, particularly young boys.

Families, in desperation, send their children to these so-called saints, believing they will receive spiritual healing or guidance. Instead, many end up as victims of severe physical and sexual abuse.

Recent cases in Kashmir have exposed horrifying incidents where these predators exploited children for years before being brought to justice.

Victims of fake pirs suffer immense trauma, including:

Severe psychological distress (depression, anxiety, PTSD).

Physical scars and injuries due to violence.

Emotional damage, leading to trust issues and social withdrawal.

Loss of faith in religious figures, affecting their spiritual growth.

Families of these victims suffer grief and guilt, often blaming themselves for being deceived. Delayed justice only worsens their suffering.

The Role of Islamic Awareness and Education

To combat this issue, we must emphasize Islamic awareness and education. Every Muslim should:

Understand Shariah principles to recognize true scholars.

Verify religious leaders before following them.

Spread awareness through schools, mosques, and community centres.

Encourage legal action against impostors and predators.

The Role of Parents and Families

Parents play a crucial role in protecting their children by:

Educating them on true vs. fake scholars.

Never sending children alone to any spiritual guide.

Discussing religious matters openly.

Reporting suspicious activities immediately.

Combating Witchcraft and Magic

Many fake pirs engage in witchcraft and black magic, which Islam strictly prohibits. Miracles come only from Allah–anyone claiming supernatural powers outside Islamic teachings is engaging in forbidden practices.

Conclusion

The issue of fake pirs in Kashmir is a grave concern. Despite advancements in education and technology, people continue to fall prey due to ignorance, desperation, and blind faith.

The devastating impact on victims and their families highlights the urgent need for awareness, education, and strict legal actions against impostors. Every Muslim must follow the Quran and Sunnah and ensure they do not fall into the traps of deception.

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J&K Budget 2025: The Art of Spending Without Earning

DR SANJAY PARVA

As former U.S. President Ronald Reagan once quipped, "A government's view of the economy could be summed up in a few short phrases: If it moves, tax it. If it keeps moving, regulate it. And if it stops moving, subsidize it." Nowhere is this more evident than in Jammu and Kashmir's budget-making exercise, where the primary skill seems to be toggling someone else's money rather than generating any of its own.

Omar Abdullah, however, seems far more excited about presenting the budget than he is about actually developing a roadmap for J&K's prosperous future. Watching him revel in the grand theatrics of budget day, one might think he's unveiling a revolutionary economic doctrine. In reality, it's just another exercise in playing treasurer to someone else's hard-earned money while failing to create a system where J&K can stand on its own feet.

As he prepares to present the Jammu and Kashmir budget on March 7, a fundamental reality remains unchanged - J&K does not generate its own wealth; it merely spends what it receives. Year after year, the budget has been an exercise in toggling someone else's money, largely comprised of central grants, loans, and devolution funds. This institutionalized economic dependency has crippled the region's ability to achieve self-reliance, making it a perpetual economic liability rather than a self-sustaining entity.

J&K's Dependency on Central Funds

Jammu and Kashmir is among the highest recipients of financial aid from the central government. According to the Union Finance Ministry, J&K receives more than Rs 35,000 crore annually in central grants, covering nearly 75% of its total budgetary expenditures. In contrast, its own revenue gen-

eration remains abysmally low. The state's tax revenue stands at just Rs 15,000 crore, barely sufficient to cover administrative costs. For every rupee it spends, a significant portion comes from Delhi, not from internal economic activity.

A look at recent budget allocations proves this point. The 2023-24 J&K Budget stood at Rs 1.18 lakh crore, with central grants contributing Rs 35,000 crore and own revenue making up just Rs 15,000 crore. The deficit, exceeding Rs 25,000 crore, was managed through borrowing. Despite repeated calls for economic revival, successive governments, including Omar Abdullah's, have failed to create a self-sustaining financial model. Instead, they rely on a cycle of spending, borrowing, and seeking more funds from New Delhi - without any significant focus on generating revenue from within the region.

A Legacy of Misgovernance

The last time Jammu and Kashmir saw real economic reforms was under Bakshi Ghulam Mohammad in the 1950s and early 1960s - more than six decades ago. Since then, every government, particularly those led by the Abdullah dynasty, have chosen to keep J&K shackled to a subsidy-driven, grant-dependent economy rather than empower it to stand on its own feet. There has been no attempt to build a robust industrial base, no vision to enhance local revenue generation, and no political will to break free from the cycle of dependence. Even after the abrogation of Article 370, which was supposed to open doors for economic transformation, J&K remains a financial black hole, surviving off Delhi's largesse while its leaders peddle excuses instead of reforms. This is not just administrative failure; it is a deliberate strategy to keep J&K permanently dependent and politically pliable.

Bakshi Ghulam Mohammad's

administration focused on building infrastructure, promoting industries, and improving public services - efforts that laid the foundation for some degree of economic self-sufficiency. Since then, successive governments, including those led by the Abdullahs, have failed to introduce any substantive economic policies aimed at reducing J&K's financial dependence. Instead of fostering industrial growth or strengthening local revenue generation, these governments have preferred to sustain a fragile, subsidy-driven economy, fully reliant on central grants. Even after the abrogation of Article 370, no transformative reforms have been undertaken to make the region fiscally independent, leaving J&K in the same cycle of economic stagnation and external dependence that has persisted for over six decades.

Omar Abdullah's last tenure as Chief Minister from 2009 to 2014 saw zero meaningful economic reforms. His government was characterized by high public expenditure without tangible returns. Nearly Rs 50,000 crore was spent on salaries and pensions, while development projects remained sluggish. No serious efforts were made to attract industries, and even basic infrastructure required for industrial growth - such as a stable power supply and business-friendly policies - was lacking.

Private enterprises continued to struggle under bureaucratic red tape and rampant corruption, making J&K one of the least favorable states for investment in India. While the region had the potential to develop a thriving tourism industry, security concerns and administrative neglect led to a 35% decline in tourist arrivals between 2010 and 2014.

No Roadmap for Economic Independence

Let's be assumptive. Instead of addressing these long-standing economic issues, the upcoming

budget is expected to follow the same trajectory. A substantial portion will be allocated to government salaries, pensions, and administrative costs, exceeding Rs 40,000 crore. Another significant share will go towards loan repayments and debt servicing, adding no economic value to the region. Political welfare schemes will be funded as a means of voter appeasement rather than genuine economic upliftment.

No major industrial policy or revenue generation plan is expected. The budget speech will likely contain vague promises, but no concrete measures to make J&K self-reliant. This continued cycle of dependency ensures that the region remains financially incapacitated, unable to stand on its own despite its vast economic potential.

The absence of a clear economic vision has turned J&K into a financially dependent region, unable to generate employment or foster growth. The 2025 budget should have prioritized industrialization, tourism infrastructure, and agricultural development to transform the region into a revenue-generating entity.

J&K contributes less than 1% of India's total industrial output despite its vast potential. A structured industrial policy offering tax breaks and incentives is necessary to attract large-scale investments. The tourism sector, which should be a dominant industry, currently contributes only 6.98% to J&K's GDP, a figure far below its true potential. Agricultural development remains another neglected sector, where farmers receive no direct support for value addition, supply chain development, or export facilitation.

Government revenue should ideally be generated through thriving businesses and industries, rather than through repeated financial aid from Delhi. However, no concrete efforts are being made to transition J&K into a self-sustaining economy.

The Cost of NC's Failures

Omar Abdullah has frequently claimed that he wants to empower the youth. However, unemployment figures tell a different story. J&K's unemployment rate in 2024 stood at 22.2%, almost three times the national average. Over 70% of youth in J&K rely on government jobs due to the lack of a private sector, leading to a mass exodus of skilled labor. In the past five years alone, more than 1.5 lakh educated youth have left J&K in search of better opportunities elsewhere.

In a pre-budget statement, Omar Abdullah admitted that "the first budget cannot solve all problems." This is a classic tactic of avoiding accountability. While he makes grand statements about a long-term vision, the people of J&K continue to face stagnation. The upcoming budget will likely offer the same old empty rhetoric, lacking a strategic roadmap for economic transformation.

J&K Needs Builders, Not Just Spenders

Jammu and Kashmir does not need another budget that is just about spending borrowed money. It needs a visionary roadmap for generating revenue, fostering industries, and empowering the private sector. Unfortunately, Omar Abdullah's administration seems intent on following the same failed model of dependency, toggling funds rather than building wealth.

The people of J&K deserve better - leaders who understand that true governance is about economic empowerment, not just the distribution of grants. Omar Abdullah's budget, unless radically different, will once again prove that he is a politician skilled in spending, not in building a prosperous future. And, until people realize that the region needs another Bakshi Ghulam Mohammad to rule, they will continue to live in abject neglect.



## The Month of Ramadan and its auspiciousness



SADAKET ALI MALIK

Ramadan is the ninth month of the Islamic calendar and is considered the most sacred and blessed month in terms of faith, worship, and spiritual purity. During this month, Allah has made fasting obligatory so that believers can develop patience, piety, and self-discipline. The greatest virtue of Ramadan is that it was in this month that the Holy Quran was revealed, serving as a complete code of life for humanity until the Day of Judgment.

The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said that when Ramadan arrives, the doors of Paradise are opened, the doors of Hell are closed, and the devils are chained. The rewards for good deeds are multiplied in this month, and those who fast are granted immeasurable blessings. The Quran states that fasting has been prescribed for you, just as it was prescribed for those before you, so that you may attain piety. Fasting is not merely abstaining from food and drink but a complete spiritual training in which one controls desires and strives to avoid sins.

Ramadan contains a special night called Laylat al-Qadr, which is greater than a thousand months. On this night, angels descend to the earth, and divine decrees are executed by the command of Allah. The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said that whoever worships on Laylat al-Qadr with faith and sincerity will have all their past sins forgiven. This night is a great opportunity for prayers, supplications, and seeking forgiveness.

During Ramadan, in addition to obligatory prayers, voluntary prayers and Taraweeh hold great significance. The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said that whoever prays during Ramadan with faith and the intention of earning rewards, their past sins will be forgiven. Charity and Zakat are also highly encouraged in this month. The Prophet (PBUH) was known to be the most generous during Ramadan, and any charity given in this month is rewarded many times over.

One of the primary objectives of Ramadan is to promote social equality and brotherhood. Fasting bridges the gap between the rich and the poor, as it allows people to experience hunger and thirst, making them more compassionate towards the less fortunate. This fosters social harmony and encourages a spirit of helping others. During Ramadan, philanthropists actively support those in need, charitable organizations become more active, and the poor receive food, clothing, and other necessities.

sities.

The fundamental goal of Ramadan is to instill piety. When an individual adopts piety, its effects extend to society as a whole. People avoid lying, cheating, theft, jealousy, and other vices, leading to a culture of honesty, righteousness, and moral values. Fasting teaches patience, which is a valuable trait in both personal and social life.

By experiencing hunger and thirst during fasting, people develop empathy for the struggles of the poor. This awareness motivates them to give more in charity and Zakat, reducing economic disparity in society. During Ramadan, people generously support others, participate in collective iftars, and engage in charitable activities, creating a society based on equality and human compassion.

In Ramadan, family members come together for suhoor (pre-dawn meal) and iftar (breaking of fast), strengthening familial bonds. Additionally, hosting iftar gatherings with relatives, friends, and neighbors fosters love, brotherhood, and social harmony.

During Ramadan, people engage more in worship, mosques are filled with worshippers, and the environment becomes one of remembrance and devotion. This results in a decrease in crime rates, as people become more conscious of their actions due to the fear of Allah and accountability in the Hereafter.

Fasting provides not only spiritual but also physical benefits. It detoxifies the body, strengthens the immune system, and encourages a balanced diet. A healthier society is more active, hardworking, and positive, contributing to overall development and well-being.

Ramadan is not just a month of worship and fasting but also a means of bringing positive change in individuals and society. The good habits developed in this month should be continued throughout life. If a person maintains prayers, fasting, charity, and other righteous acts even after Ramadan, it is a sign that they have truly benefited from this sacred month.

This blessed month brings us closer to Allah, provides spiritual and moral training, teaches patience, gratitude, and compassion, and reminds us that worldly life is temporary and that true success lies in pleasing Allah and attaining goodness in the Hereafter. We should strive to spend this holy month with sincerity, devotion, and love and incorporate its teachings into our daily lives to achieve success in both this world and the Hereafter.

sadaketmalik.blogspot.com

# The silent death of natural springs: A crisis ignored or a call to action?

FAROOQ AHMAD BAKLOO

The alarming rate at which natural springs are drying up is a matter of grave concern. These once-abundant water sources, which have sustained ecosystems and human settlements for centuries, are now vanishing due to environmental degradation and climate change. However, rather than engaging in meaningful discourse or seeking viable solutions, many—especially the youth—are more preoccupied with capturing these deteriorating sites for social media content. This reflects a broader societal failure to recognize the urgency of environmental conservation. Addressing this crisis requires a dual approach—one rooted in theological reflection and the other in scientific reasoning. Without an integrated strategy, we risk losing these vital resources forever, pushing local populations and ecosystems into further distress.

### Theological Perspective: Environmental Stewardship as a Moral Obligation

From a theological standpoint, the sanctity of natural resources must be upheld. Immoral and irresponsible activities at these sites not only degrade their purity but also reflect a detachment from ethical and spiritual responsibilities. The Qur'an and Hadith emphasize stewardship over nature, urging humanity to preserve the gifts of creation.

The Qur'an repeatedly highlights the importance of water as a divine blessing. Allah states, "And We made from water every living thing. Then will they not believe?" (Surah Al-Anbiya 21:30). This verse underscores the centrality of water in sustaining life and signifies its sacredness. Similarly,

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) advised against wasting water even when performing ablution near a flowing river, emphasizing conservation even in abundance. The message is clear: safeguarding water sources is not merely an environmental responsibility but a divine command. Disrespecting or misusing water sources is a violation of spiritual and ethical obligations.

The depletion of springs must not only be seen as an environmental crisis but also as a moral failing. As part of our spiritual duties, we must collectively reflect on the consequences of our negligence and seek forgiveness from Allah. The Qur'an warns against corruption on Earth, stating, "Corruption has appeared throughout the land and sea by what the hands of people have earned so He may let them taste part of what they have done that perhaps they will return [to righteousness]." (Surah Ar-Rum 30:41). This verse reminds us that environmental degradation is a direct consequence of human actions, urging us to restore balance and harmony with nature. If we do not heed this warning, we risk facing greater ecological consequences that will not only affect us but also future generations.

### Scientific Perspective: Understanding the Causes of Spring Depletion

A scientific analysis reveals that the depletion of natural springs is a direct consequence of environmentally destructive practices. These include:

**Unregulated Deforestation:** The removal of trees, especially in catchment areas, reduces soil retention and groundwater recharge, leading to the drying up of springs. Forests play a crucial role in absorbing rainwater and replenishing underground

aquifers. Without them, surface runoff increases, preventing water from percolating into the ground.

**Cementing of Spring Surroundings:** Encasing springs in concrete restricts natural percolation, disrupting their flow and sustainability. Many traditional water sources have been destroyed in the name of modernization, cutting off their natural replenishment systems.

**Excessive Sand Extraction from Riverbeds:** Rivers serve as feeder systems for springs. Over-extraction of sand disrupts the natural filtration system, reducing water availability. Sand and gravel beds in river systems act as natural sponges that regulate water flow and storage.

**Unchecked Encroachment:** Urban expansion and infrastructure development encroach upon critical water recharge zones, exacerbating the depletion of springs. Wetlands and water bodies are increasingly being filled in for construction, preventing rainwater from reaching underground reserves.

**Indiscriminate Dumping of Waste:** Pollution of water bodies further weakens the natural hydrological cycle, making springs more vulnerable to drying up. Toxic chemicals from industrial and household waste seep into the soil, poisoning underground water reserves.

A failure to mitigate these actions will further disrupt the natural balance, exacerbating water scarcity and ecological imbalance. Addressing these issues requires a combination of policy-level interventions and grassroots awareness campaigns.

### The Case of Achabal Spring: A Warning Sign

The recent drying of the Achabal Spring in Kashmir serves as a stark warning. This spring, which has been the lifeline of the area, is not only crucial for agriculture but also for sustaining the renowned Mughal Garden. If it permanently dries up, the consequences will be severe:

**Impact on Local Residents:** The spring provides drinking water to the local population, and its depletion would lead to severe water shortages. Access to clean drinking water is already a major global challenge, and the loss of natural springs further intensifies this crisis.

**Economic Consequences:** The decline of the Mughal Garden's attraction will reduce tourist inflow, directly affecting revenue collection and local livelihoods. Tourism is a major economic driver, and its decline would push local businesses into financial hardship.

**Environmental Indicators:** The drying of the spring is a direct result of reduced water levels in the Brangi River, highlighting the tangible impacts of climate change in the region. Reduced river flows disrupt ecosystems, affecting biodiversity and agricultural productivity.

### Learning from Prophet Yusuf (PBUH): A Model for Sustainability

The Quranic story of Prophet Yusuf (PBUH) provides a valuable lesson in disaster preparedness. During times of abundance, Prophet Yusuf advised the Pharaoh to store grain in preparation for a prolonged drought (Surah Yusuf 12:47-49). Similarly, we must adopt forward-thinking water conservation strategies to mitigate the impact of climate change on our natural springs. Instead

of waiting for an irreversible crisis, proactive measures must be taken now to ensure water security for the future.

### Solutions for the Sustainable Preservation of Springs

To restore and protect Achabal Spring and similar water sources, a multi-pronged approach combining scientific techniques and community involvement is needed.

**Implementation of Water Harvesting Techniques:** Rainwater harvesting must be introduced at the grassroots level. Constructing small check dams, percolation tanks, and infiltration wells can help replenish groundwater levels.

**Storage Infrastructure for Emergency Use:** Governments should build large, modern water storage tanks to preserve excess water during wet seasons for use during dry periods.

**Strict Regulation on Sand Extraction:** A complete ban on sand excavation from sensitive areas of the Brangi River should be enforced. Identifying recharge points and conducting afforestation in these areas will help retain water.

**Ecological Interventions:** Creating small lake-like structures in the Brangi River can effectively recharge the springs originating from it by enhancing groundwater percolation. This can be achieved through check dams, percolation ponds, gabion structures, and afforestation along riverbanks.

**Community Engagement and Policy Implementation:** Local communities must be actively involved in conservation efforts. Reviving traditional water management practices, conducting awareness campaigns, and integrating scientific solutions with indigenous knowledge will ensure long-term sustainability. farooqmajeed19@gmail.com

# The essence of the Holy Month of Ramadan: A journey towards faith and self-discipline

DR NISAR FARHAD

Ramadan, one of the sacred months in the Islamic calendar, begins with the sighting of the new crescent moon and fluctuates each year because the lunar Islamic calendar follows the phases of the moon. It was also part of ancient Arabs' calendars, and the title Ramadan stems from the Arabic root "ar-ramad," which means scorching heat.

It is believed that in A.D. 610, the angel Jibra'eel appeared to Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and revealed to him the Holy Quran. That revelation, Lailat-ul-Qadr—or the "Night of Power"—is believed to have occurred during Ramadan, as mentioned in the Holy Quran: "Surely, We have revealed to you the Grand Night, and what will make you comprehend what the Grand Night is? The Grand Night is better than a thousand months. The Angels and the Spirit descend in it by the permission of their Lord for every affair. Peace! It is till the break of the morning." (Holy Quran 97:5)

According to Hadith, Lailat-ul-Qadr falls on one of the odd nights of the last ten days of Ramadan, potentially on the 21st, 23rd, 25th, 27th, or 29th night. The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) instructed his followers to seek it in the last ten nights, especially during the odd nights.

Hazrat Ayesha (RA) narrated that the Prophet (PBUH)

advised reciting the following dua on Lailat-ul-Qadr: "O Allah! You are the Forgiver. If You like to forgive, forgive me."

Muslims fast during Ramadan as a way to honour the revelation of the Quran. Throughout this month, fasting between sunrise and sunset is mandatory for all Muslims, except for the ill, pregnant, travelling, or menstruating. Through fasting, a Muslim experiences hunger and thirst and commiserates with those who have little to eat and drink daily.

Fasting teaches charity, generosity, and goodwill toward others, as increased charity during this month fosters compassion for those in need.

The main essence of fasting is learning Taqwa (self-restraint), as mentioned in the Holy Quran and Hadiths: "O you who believe! Fasting is prescribed to you as it was prescribed to those before you so that you may learn self-restraint (Taqwa)." (Quran 2:183)

In a well-known hadith, Muhammad (PBUH) said: "Allah, the Almighty and Master of Honor, says: 'All actions of a person are for himself, except for his fasting, which is exclusively for Me, and I shall reward him for it.' The fast is a shield (against vice and the fire of Hell). Therefore, when any of you is fasting, he should abstain from loose talk and avoid verbosity and noisy exchanges of words." (Bukhari and Muslim: Abu Hurayrah)

When a Muslim combines prayer, fasting, and charity—three of the five pillars of Islam—during Ramadan, Allah promises immense rewards.

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said: "Whoever establishes prayers during the nights of Ramadan faithfully, out of sincere faith and hoping to attain Allah's rewards (not for showing off), all his past sins will be forgiven." (Bukhari: Abu Hurayrah)

Beyond its great spiritual merits and rewards, fasting also offers several medical benefits. The 12-14 hours of fasting during Ramadan is a form of intermittent fasting, which helps reset the digestive system, boost metabolism, aid in weight loss, and more.

**Weight Management** - Fasting prompts the body to use stored fat for energy, leading to weight loss over time.

**Improved Insulin Sensitivity** - Fasting enhances insulin sensitivity, which is crucial for people with type 2 diabetes or those at risk. It lowers blood sugar and improves the body's ability to use insulin efficiently.

**Heart Health** - Fasting benefits cardiovascular health by improving risk factors like blood pressure, weight, and cholesterol levels.

**Cellular Repair & Longevity** - During fasting, the body enters autophagy, a process that removes damaged cells and proteins, promoting cellular repair and potentially increasing longevity.

**Brain Function & Memory**

- Fasting enhances brain function, improves memory, and boosts the production of brain-derived neurotrophic factor (BDNF), which supports brain health and may reduce the risk of Alzheimer's disease.

**Hormone Regulation** - Fasting helps regulate insulin, ghrelin (hunger hormone), and leptin (fullness hormone), leading to better appetite control and reduced cravings.

**Enhanced Metabolism** - Fasting boosts metabolism, forcing the body to burn stored fat more efficiently, leading to increased energy levels.

**Reduced Inflammation** - Chronic inflammation is linked to heart disease, cancer, and autoimmune disorders. Fasting helps reduce inflammation markers, lowering the risk of such diseases.

**Gut Health** - Fasting allows the digestive system to rest, promoting the growth of beneficial gut bacteria, which improves digestion and strengthens immunity.

**Detoxification** - During fasting, the liver has more time and energy to detoxify the body, removing harmful substances naturally.

**Mental & Emotional Benefits** - Fasting enhances mental clarity, improves mood, and instills self-discipline, fostering a sense of inner peace and empowerment.

When breaking the fast during Iftar, Muslims traditionally begin by eating three dates. While this is done for spiritual reasons, dates offer

multiple health benefits:

- Rich in fibre - Aids digestion and prevents constipation.

- High in potassium & magnesium - Supports heart health and muscle function.

- Source of natural sugars - Provides instant energy after a long day of fasting.

- Vitamin B-rich - Helps in metabolism and brain function.

To maximize the benefits of fasting, it is essential to avoid overindulgence during Iftar. Eating oily, rich foods can lead to weight gain, high cholesterol, and digestive issues, making fasting more difficult. Instead, a nutritious and balanced diet ensures a healthier fasting experience. Dr Michael Mosley, in his book The Fast Diet, stated: "There is nothing else you can do to your body that is as powerful as fasting."

Ultimately, the essence of this blessed month lies in seeking forgiveness for past sins, reconnecting with our purpose, and lifting the veil of heedlessness from our hearts.

Let us embrace Taqwa, develop a sense of accountability to Allah Almighty, and foster mindful consciousness of the Hereafter.

May Allah (SWT) grant us the strength to observe Ramadan with sincerity and devotion, and may He bless us with forgiveness, mercy, and eternal success.

**The writer is a lecturer in Chemistry at the J&K School Education Department**



# J&K exhibits sustainable innovations at 12th Regional 3R, Circular Economy Forum in Asia-Pacific

## UT's Dal Lake Weed Processing Unit, climate initiatives steal spotlight

HT News Network

JAMMU, MARCH 3: In a landmark move, Srinagar Smart City Limited signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) under the CITIS 2.0 program regarding implementation of integrated waste management systems including smart collection networks and AI-driven recycling hubs to transform Srinagar into a zero-landfill city by 2030.

The MoU was signed during the 12th Regional 3R (Reduce, Reuse, Recycle) and Circular Economy Forum in Asia and the Pacific, being

held in Rajasthan from March 3 to 5, 2025. Additionally, the UT government inked a state-level agreement to establish a Climate Observatory, a first-of-its-kind institution in North India. The observatory will monitor climate variables, assess risks and formulate adaptive strategies for vulnerable sectors like agriculture, tourism and water resources.

The event, a flagship platform for advancing sustainable development and resource efficiency, saw J&K highlighting its pioneering initiatives in waste management and circular economy practices, reinforcing its commitment to environmental



stewardship.

The Lakes Conservation and Management Authority (LCMA) showcased Jammu & Kashmir's ground-

breaking Dal Lake Weed Processing Unit at the forum, drawing widespread attention from policymakers, technocrats and sustainability

experts. The project, which converts invasive aquatic weeds into organic manure and biogas, exemplifies the UT's innovative approach towards tackling ecological challenges while promoting circular economy principles.

Dignitaries including Policy Makers, Thinkers, Researchers and Planners from all across the Country visited the J&K stall and applauded the initiative of transforming lake waste into valuable resources adopting sustainable waste management practices.

The J&K delegation, led by senior officials from the Housing and Urban

Development Department, engaged in extensive knowledge-sharing sessions with the representatives from other states and Self-Help Groups (SHGs). Key focus areas included "Waste-to-Wonder Technologies", "Waste-to-Energy Innovations" and "Community-Led Circular Economy Models".

The forum offered a wealth of ideas, particularly in decentralizing waste management and empowering local communities. The visit provided an opportunity to explore best practices and modern technologies for potential replication in Jammu & Kashmir.

## GCE organizes Five-Day Civil Defence Training Program

HT News Network

JAMMU, MARCH 03: The Government College of Education, Jammu, successfully inaugurated a five-day Civil Defence Training Program. The program aims to equip students with essential disaster preparedness skills and emergency response techniques.

The inaugural session witnessed the esteemed presence of Chief Warden Paramjeet Kumar, Deputy Chief Warden R. Vijay Magotra, Training Incharge SI Ram Dayal Saini, and



Training Instructors Rajinder Kumar and Sujeet Singh. Their expert guidance and practical demonstrations provided invaluable insights to the participants.

The event was meticulously organized under the leadership of NSS Programme Officer Professor Sarita Dogra and Women

Development Cell Convenor Dr. Shubhra Jamwal. The Principal of the College, Dr. Jyoti Parihar, along with faculty members Dr. Rajinder Kour, Dr. Davinder, Professor Deepali, and Roopa Kumari, also graced the occasion with their presence, encouraging students to actively engage in the training. More than 100

students participated in this initiative, showcasing their keen interest in learning life-saving techniques. The training covered critical aspects such as first aid, fire safety, disaster management, and emergency evacuation procedures.

Speaking at the event, Principal Dr. Jyoti Parihar emphasized the importance of Civil Defence training in empowering youth with the skills needed to respond effectively to emergencies. She lauded the efforts of the Civil Defence team and faculty members in making this training a success.

## DC inspects car parking slots at Shopian

HT News Network

SHOPIAN, MARCH 03: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Shopian, Shishir Gupta today conducted a comprehensive assessment of traffic flow and parking facilities in the town.

He visited and inspected key locations, including the District Hospital (DH) Shopian, Old Bus Stand, Old JK Bank, Town Hall Park and other parking sites.

During these inspections, DC evaluated existing parking facilities and pinpointed areas experiencing traffic congestion.

Gupta emphasized the need for effective traffic management, improved parking arrangements, and minimal inconvenience to commuters and visitors.

Directions were issued



to the concerned to enhance parking capacities within the hospital premises and transport hubs.

He underscored the importance of maintaining proper sanitation and cleanliness in and around the town.

The DC was accompanied by ADC, Dr. Zakir Hussain Faaz; ACR, Tehsildar Shop-

ian, ARTO, Xen R&B, Secretary MC and others. Deputy Commissioner (DC) Shopian, Shishir Gupta today conducted a comprehensive assessment of traffic flow and parking facilities in the town.

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## Div Com Jammu discusses arrangements for Rotary International's Mega Health camp in Doda-Kishtwar

HT News Network

JAMMU, MARCH 03: Divisional Commissioner Jammu Ramesh Kumar today chaired a meeting to discuss arrangements and logistics for Mega Health camp in Doda-Kishtwar by Rotary International to be held in the second week of April, 2025.

The meeting attended by Deputy Commissioners of Doda and Kishtwar, representative of Rotary International, Director Health Jammu, Principal GMC Doda, officials from Ayush, CMOs held detailed discussion on the smooth and successful conduct of the Mega Health camp.

The aim of the Mega Health camp is to provide free of cost medical services including surgeries to the needy and marginalized sections of the society in Doda and Kishtwar.

The Divisional Commissioner directed the Deputy Commissioners and health officials to provide wide publicity and prepare data



of the people who can benefit from this Mega Health camp. It was informed that similar Mega Health camps were also organised earlier in Rajouri Poonch where large numbers of people especially from remote and far-flung areas were provided best medical services and critical surgeries were done.

The Div Com directed the Deputy Commissioners and CMOs to identify the people especially those who are in need and from remote and

flung areas of their district to bring them to the Mega Health camp.

During the one week long Mega Medical camp, a team of doctors and specialists will provide general and specialised medical care and surgeries to alleviate the ailments of the poor and marginalized people. The District Administration in collaboration with Health Department will provide logistics and make arrangements for the week long medical camp

in Doda and Kishtwar. The meeting attended by Deputy Commissioners of Doda and Kishtwar, representative of Rotary International, Director Health Jammu, Principal GMC Doda, officials from Ayush, CMOs held detailed discussion on the smooth and successful conduct of the Mega Health camp. The aim of the Mega Health camp is to provide free of cost medical services including surgeries to the needy and marginalized sections of the society.

## Police attaches immovable property of terrorist associate under UAPA in Shopian

HT News Network

Shopian March 03: In a significant step towards combating terrorism, Police in Shopian has attached a double-storied residential property belonging to Ilyas Ahmad Dar son of Mohd Shafi Dar resident of Wandina Melhoura. The attachment was carried out under Section 25 of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967 (UAPA).

The property registered under Khasra No. 115 in Wandina village, is valued at Rs. 24,09,221/-. The attachment has been officially recorded in the revenue records, and the necessary legal notices prohibiting its sale or transfer have been duly issued under the provisions of the UAPA.

This action is linked to Case FIR No. 94/2024 of Police Station Zainapora and was executed in the presence of a duly constituted police team and the Executive Magistrate, ensuring full compliance with legal procedures.

The attachment marks a significant milestone in the ongoing crackdown on unlawful and subversive activities in the region. It underscores the firm commitment of Shopian Police to neutralizing threats to national security and maintaining peace and order.

GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU & KASHMIR

OFFICE OF THE TEHSILDAR KHOIE

(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 Sangrama) / chokedar has submitted case file pertaining to Birth of SAJAD AHMAD MIR S/O ABDULAHAD MIR R/O HANDKOTE Tehsil KREERI Distt. Baramulla having verified the date of Birth as 10/05/1990 and event has been shown to be occurred at HOME for issuance of delay order. In this connection . if anyone have any objection to the issuance of delay order of Birth certificate shall present his/her claim this office within 07 days, after that no objection shall be entertaine

Executive Magistrate

1st Class KHOIE

GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU & KASHMIR

OFFICE OF THE TEHSILDAR KHOIE

(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 Sangrama) / chokedar has submitted case file pertaining to Birth of MOHAMMAD IBRAHIM SHEIKH S/O WASEEM AKRUM SHEIKH R/O PALHALLAN Tehsil PATTAN Distt. Baramulla having verified the date of Birth as 23/11/2022 and event has been shown to be occurred at SDH KREERI for issuance of delay order. In this connection . if anyone have any objection to the issuance of delay order of Birth certificate shall present his/her claim this office within 07 days, after that no objection shall be entertained.

Executive Magistrate

1st Class KHOIE

## PUBLIC NOTICE

I have lost my Route Permit Of My vechile Tata Youdha Bearinging Registration No JK01AR- 9590 some where at Batwara ...Now i am applying for its duplicate if anybody having any objection inln this regard he may contact RTO Srinagar within seven days from the publication of this notice after that no objection will be entertained.

Name...Anil Kumar Gupta  
R/O Sadar Bazar B B Cant Batwara  
Ph No:-9419000136

## اطلاع عام

هر خاص عام کو اطلاع دی جاتی ہے کہ مجھے ہوم سٹے بنام home stay FROSTY HILLS کی رجسٹریشن محکمہ نورازم پہلگام کے دفتر میں کرانی مطلوب ہے اگر کسی کو کوئی عذر ہو تو وہ سات یوم کے اندر اندر اسسٹنڈنٹ ڈپریکٹر نورازم پہلگام کے دفتر میں پیش کرے بعد ازاں معاد کوئی عذر قبول نہیں ہوگا

المستہر جسمینہ اختر زوجہ عامر گل ملک ساکن بٹہ کوٹ پہلگام

## PUBLIC NOTICE

I have changed my name from (Khan Masrat Nabi) to (Masrat Nabi). In future I will be known as (Masrat Nabi) D/O Gh. Nabi Khan R/O Haihama Bonagam, District Kupwara. If any body is having any objection he/she may contact Passport Office, Srinagar with in 7 days. After 7 days no objection will be accepted.

## PUBLIC NOTICE

My daughter's parentage &( DOB ) has been wrongly written as AFREENA RASHEED & DOB 15/09/2014 while her correct parentage is AFREENA RASHID D/ O ABDUL RASHID TELI & her correct DOB is 30/10/2012 which needs to be corrected if anybody having any objection in this regard he/she may file his/her objection in the office BDO WAGOORA/TEHSIL OFFICE WAGOORA within seven days from the publication of this notice after that no objection will be entertained

Name....ABDUL RASHID TELI  
F/O AFREENA RASHID  
R/O BANDIPAYEEN

### GOVERNMENT OF UNION TERRITORY OF JAMMU OFFICE OF THE TEHSILDAR SALLAR LEGAL HEIR CERTIFICATE

It is certified that Sh. Sent Kumari SYED MUSTAFA SHAH, S/W/ SYED HYDER SHAHR HARDUKATHAL SOFIPORA Tehsil SALLAR and District ANANINAG JAMMU AND KASHMIR who had expired on 24/01/2025 is survived by following Legal Heirs.

S.No	Name	Age	Relationship with the Deceased	Marital Status
1	HAMEEDA BANDO	47	Wife	widow
2	SHEEBA HYDER	23	daughter	UNMARRIED
3	SYED SAFI HYDER	15	son	UNMARRIED
4	SYED SIRTAIN HYDER	7	son	UNMARRIED

TEHSILDAR SALLAR



# DC Budgam reviews arrangements for holy month of Ramadan

■ HT News Network

BUDGAM, MARCH 03: In order to ensure a smooth and hassle-free month of Ramadan, Deputy Commissioner (DC) Budgam, Akshay Labroo today convened a meeting with district officers here in the Conference Hall DC Office Complex.

During the meeting, threadbare discussions were held on various arrangements including availability of safe drinking water, uninterrupted power supply, first aid, sanitation, garbage collection, deployment of fire tenders, traffic management and security etc.

Necessary directions were issued to the heads of various departments to ensure foolproof arrangements during the month of Ramadan.

To ensure uninterrupted power supply during Ramadan, the DC instructed the Executive Engineer of the Power Development Department (PDD) to sensitize their field staff and ensure hassle-free electricity supply to consumers, especially during critical times such as Sehri and Iftar.

The Executive Engineer Jal Shakti Budgam and Chadoora were tasked with ensuring a regular supply of drinking water.

Emphasising the importance of consumer protection, the DC directed the formation of special market checking squads which includes revenue, police and food safety officers to monitor quality check and prevent profiteering, hoarding, and overcharging by shopkeepers during the month.

ARTO was directed to ensure suf-



ficient availability of vehicles during the month, while AD food and Animal husbandry department were directed for ensuring adequate quantity of

food grains, poultry and other essential commodities during the month.

To uphold cleanliness in the town and panchayats, the DC directed the

ACP and EOs to take proactive measures of sanitation drive and urged public cooperation in maintaining hygiene.

The CMO was directed to ensure health teams along with ambulance availability 24x7 during the whole month in all health and medical institutions to provide medical assistance.

Additionally, the Traffic Police have been instructed to deploy sufficient personnel in high-traffic areas to ensure smooth vehicular movement.

During the meeting, SDMs were directed to regularly monitor market prices and ensure the availability of essential commodities and services within their respective areas. They were directed to conduct routine checks to maintain fair pricing and quality standards in local markets.

Besides, ADC Budgam, Mehraj ud

din Shah; CPO Budgam, CMO, all SDMs, CAO, Executive Engineer Jal Shakti, PDD, ARTO, AD Food, all EOs and other concerned officers were present in the meeting. The CMO was directed to ensure health teams along with ambulance availability 24x7 during the whole month in all health and medical institutions to provide medical assistance.

Additionally, the Traffic Police have been instructed to deploy sufficient personnel in high-traffic areas to ensure smooth vehicular movement.

During the meeting, SDMs were directed to regularly monitor market prices and ensure the availability of essential commodities and services within their respective areas. They were directed to conduct routine checks to maintain fair pricing and quality standards in local markets.

## DC B'pora reviews execution of CSR works for FY 2024-25, Action Plan for FY 2025-26

■ HT News Network

BANDIPORA, MARCH 03: The Deputy Commissioner (DC) Bandipora, Manzoor Ahmad Qadri, on Monday chaired a meeting to review the ongoing works under Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) of NHPC for the financial year 2024-25 and Action Plan for FY 2025-26.

The meeting focused on the execution of CSR initiatives of NHPC under the KishanGanga project and the submission of action plans and Detailed Project Reports (DPRs) for the upcoming fiscal year 2025-26.

During the meeting, it was informed that an allocation of Rs. 92.08 lakhs was made for CSR works in FY 2023-24, while Rs. 155.67 lakhs have been



allocated for the current financial year, 2024-25.

The DC emphasized the importance of timely submission of utilization certificates of allocated funds by the concerned departments by March 10, 2025, for the release of the pending 10% funds allocated for CSR activities.

Highlighting the importance of environmental

sustainability, the DC instructed the relevant departments to submit a detailed locational plan for proposed environmental management activities, after proper field surveys.

In preparation for the CSR activities of FY 2025-26, Qadri urged the concerned departments to identify activities with focus on community ben-

efits and impact areas.

He said District Administration is committed to ensure the effective implementation of CSR activities aimed at benefiting and improving the overall socio-economic conditions of the impact areas.

The meeting was attended by Head of Project (HoP) NHPC Bandipora, Lakhmi Chand, PO ICDS Yaar Ali Khan, ACD, CPO and district officers from various departments. The DC emphasized the importance of timely submission of utilization certificates of allocated funds by the concerned departments by March 10, 2025, for the release of the pending 10% funds allocated for CSR activities. Highlighting the importance of environmental sustainability, the DC instructed the relevant departments to submit.

## DC Shopian convenes meeting on Mughal road opening

### Instructs for its early opening for traffic

■ HT News Network

SHOPIAN, MARCH 03: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Shopian, Shishir Gupta today convened a meeting of officers regarding the opening of Mughal Road for vehicular traffic.

DC enquired about the feasibility of opening of Mughal Road for regular traffic movement. The concerned officers from BRO and Mechanical Engineering Department apprised about the snow clearance operations along the vital road link, across the Pir Panjal. They intimated that recent snowfall has delayed the opening of Mughal Road as the snow clearance process had to be started afresh.

DC while emphasising the importance of the road, directed the concerned authorities to speed up the snow clearance work with deployment of adequate machinery so that it can be made through for traffic soon. ADDC, Dr. Nasir Ahmed Lone;



ADC, Dr. Zakir Hussain Faaz; ARTO, Tehsildar Shopian and other concerned from Mechanical Engineering and BRO attended the meeting. Deputy Commissioner (DC) Shopian, Shishir Gupta today convened a meeting of officers regarding the opening of Mughal Road for vehicular traffic.

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They intimated that recent snowfall has delayed the opening of Mughal Road as the snow clearance process had to be started afresh.

## DC Kupwara hands-over Rs. 3.50 crore cheque for payment under Education Assistance scheme

■ HT News Network

KUPWARA, MARCH 03: The Deputy Commissioner (DC) Kupwara, Ayushi Sudan today handed over a cheque of Rs.3.50 crore to J&K Bank for payment to Building & Other Construction Worker beneficiaries under Education Assistance scheme.

Speaking at the occasion, the DC said that empowerment and welfare of the weaker sections of the society is among the top priorities of the Government. She asked the concerned officers to ensure timely redressal of grievances of the Labour beneficiaries so that they do not face any inconvenience in getting benefits under different labour welfare schemes of the Government.

Giving details, the Assistant Labour Commissioner (ALC) Kupwara who was present on the occasion, informed that the amount of Rs.3.50 crore under Education Assistance scheme will be credited to the bank accounts of 8027 Labour beneficiaries of the district to facilitate education of their children.

## NCC Cadets of Amar Singh College bring laurels to J&K at Republic Day Camp-2025

■ HT News Network

SRINAGAR, MARCH 03: NCC cadets of Amar Singh College, Srinagar SUO Musaib Hassan Bhat and JUO Aqib Javaid have brought immense pride to the institution and the Union Territory by excelling at the Republic Day Camp (RDC) 2025 held at DG NCC, New Delhi.

The cadets were also selected for the NCC marching contingent at the prestigious Kartavya Path, a remarkable achievement showcasing their discipline, dedication, and patriotism. The RDC 2025 featured 148 cadets from all 17 NCC Directorates across India, with participants selected through a rigorous training and screening process. Representing Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh NCC Directorate, both cadets demonstrated exceptional leadership and commitment, standing out at the national-level event.

JUO Aqib Javaid was honored with a Letter of Appreciation from the Additional Director General (ADG) NCC of J&K Directorate for his outstanding performance and dedication. His recognition is a testament to the high standards of training imparted by the NCC unit of Amar Singh College. Adding to the college's glory, SUO Musaib Hassan Bhat received an Appreciation Letter from the Lieutenant Governor of Jammu & Kashmir, recognizing his remarkable contributions during the RDC 2025. His achievement underscores the talent and potential of youth from the region on national platforms.

## DC Shopian reviews implementation of PM Surya Ghar (Muft Bijli Yojna)

Asks for enhanced awareness activities for maximum registrations

■ HT News Network

SHOPIAN, MARCH 03: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Shopian, Shishir Gupta today convened a meeting with concerned officers to review the implementation of PM Surya Ghar (Muft Bijli Yojana) in the district.

The scheme aims to enhance the share of rooftop solar capacity and empower residential households to generate their own electricity, supported by significant financial contributions from the government.

The meeting was informed that a substantial number of applications have been received for installation of rooftops in the district.



Gupta emphasized the need to increase registrations under the scheme and directed Tehsildars and officers and officials of KPDCCL for their cooperation to launch massive awareness campaigns at their respective jurisdiction to motivate the people so that they will be benefited.

ADDC, Dr. Nasir Ahmed

Lone; ADC, Dr. Zakir Hussain Faaz; Tehsildars, Executive Engineer KPDCCL, Tehsildars and other concerned were present. Gupta emphasized the need to increase registrations under the scheme and directed Tehsildars and officers and officials of KPDCCL for their cooperation to launch massive awareness campaigns.

## Distt Admin. Kupwara airlifts critical patients from Karnah

■ HT News Network

KUPWARA, MARCH 2: After closure of different border roads in the district due to recent heavy snowfall, District Administration Kupwara successfully airlifted critically ill patients from snow bound border area Karnah, ensuring they receive urgent medical care.

On the directions of the Deputy Commissioner (DC) Kupwara, Ayushi Sudan, an evacuation operation was undertaken by the officers and field staff during which Rohail Mir, a 15-year-old from Kharwara, and 18-month-old Bibi Sana from Kona Gabra, both of whom required immediate medical intervention were airlifted from Karnah. After their safe evacuation to Kupwara, both the patients were boarded in the Ambulance to reach Srinagar for advanced medical care. After recent snowfall across the

district which resulted in the closure of various border roads of Karnah, Machill and Keran, District Administration Kupwara had made adequate arrangement of helicopter service for these snow bound border areas to carry any medical emergency and evacuation operation. To ensure seamless helicopter service to different border areas from the district headquarter, Assistant Labour Commissioner (ALC) has been designated as Nodal Officer of the service.

Meanwhile, the local people of Karnah area have expressed gratitude to the Deputy Commissioner Kupwara for her proactive approach of administration. They also appreciated the efforts of SDM Karnah and other Officers for their swift and coordinated response. Meanwhile, the local people of Karnah area have expressed gratitude to the Deputy Commissioner Kupwara for her proactive approach of administration.

## DC Ganderbal chairs District Skill Committee meeting Discusses EDP under SANKALP

■ HT News Network

GANDERBAL, MARCH 03: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Ganderbal, Jatin Kishore, today chaired a meeting of the District Skill Committee (DSC) to review the preparation of the District Skill Development Plan (DSDP) at the VC Room, DC Office, Ganderbal.

The meeting assessed the skill development initiatives undertaken in the district and deliberated on strategies to enhance vocational and entrepreneurship development training to create employment opportunities.

A key focus of the meeting was the Entrepreneurship Development Program (EDP) under SANKALP, being implemented by JKEDI, aimed at supporting educated unemployed youth in the district.



The District Nodal Officer, JKEDI, informed the committee that the program would equip participants with insights into entrepreneurship as a career and provide exposure to various aspects of

starting and managing an enterprise.

The DC directed officials to identify skill-deficit sectors in the district and ensure the enrollment of unemployed youth in relevant skill development pro-

grams to effectively address unemployment challenges in the district.

He further emphasized the need for a comprehensive District Skill Plan, involving various line departments, to expand the scope of skill development initiatives under multiple government schemes, thereby creating ample employment opportunities for the youth of the district.

The meeting was attended by the Chief Planning Officer, General Manager DIC, Chief Education Officer, Assistant Labour Commissioner, District Social Welfare Officer, and other committee members. He further emphasized the need for a comprehensive District Skill Plan, involving various line departments, to expand the scope of skill development initiatives under multiple government schemes, thereby creating ample employment.



## DC Poonch reviews performance of Banks under Annual Credit Plan

■ HT News Network

POONCH, MARCH 03: Deputy Commissioner Poonch, Vikas Kundal, chaired a meeting today at the DC Office complex to review the performance of banks under the Annual Credit Plan (ACP) for the financial year 2024-25.

The meeting was attended by key officials, including the GM DIC Poonch, Deputy Director Employment, Chief Animal Husbandry Officer, Chief Horticulture Officer, District Sheep Husbandry Officer, LDM Poonch, District Officer KVIB, and Cluster Head of JK Bank Poonch, among others.

During the meeting, the Deputy Commissioner reviewed the progress of



banks under government-sponsored schemes. He expressed concern regarding the low credit dispensation in the renewable

energy and agriculture sectors.

Banks were directed to achieve 100 percent credit dispensation in renewable

energy and other agriculture schemes within the next 10 days. District officers of agriculture and allied departments were advised to sponsor credit-linked cases under schemes such as the Holistic Agriculture Development Programme and the National Livestock Mission.

Additionally, the Deputy Commissioner emphasized the need for 100% disbursement of the PM Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana Scheme.

The meeting highlighted the importance of collaboration between banks and sponsoring agencies to guide unemployed youth toward livelihood opportunities. Banks were urged to expedite case processing and provide comprehensive support to the youth.

■ HT News Network

REASI, MARCH 3: A key meeting on the Institutional Business Support Mechanism under Mission YUVA was convened in Reasi under the chairmanship of Deputy Commissioner Reasi Ms Nidhi Malik.

The meeting attended by the representatives from the Small Business Development Unit (SBDU) and the business Help Desks (BHD) teams to streamline the implementation process by ensuring a clear understanding of roles and responsibilities among all stakeholders.

During the session, Deputy Commissioner Reasi emphasised on the need for a well-coordinated



approach to effectively execute Mission YUVA's objectives. She underscored the importance of each stakeholder having a thorough understanding of their roles to ensure seamless and efficient implementation. A detailed presentation was conducted, outlining the specific responsibilities of each

stakeholder involved in the mission to enhance clarity and accountability.

During the session, Deputy Commissioner underscored the importance of each stakeholder having a thorough understanding of their roles to ensure seamless and efficient implementation of Mission YUVA. She also emphasised

on the selection of Yuva Doots who will play a vital role in grassroots outreach and the execution of Mission YUVA. It was decided that the selection process would adhere to the guidelines outlined in the Yuva Doot Document to ensure transparency and fairness.

DC Reasi stressed the need for coordinated efforts from all stakeholders as Mission YUVA is a hand-holding scheme of government of JK UT aimed at empowering the youth by providing them with skill development opportunities, employment support and entrepreneurial guidance. The meeting concluded with a collective resolve to work towards ensuring the initiative reaches its intended beneficiaries.

## GWC Parade organizes seminar on 'New Career Avenues'

■ HT News Network

JAMMU, MARCH 03: The Social activity Club of GCV, Parade Ground, Jammu organized a seminar on 'New Career Avenues' on 3rd March, 2025. The seminar was organized with a vision to enlighten the students about new alluring career opportunities.

At the onset, Dr. Shally Chadha, Convenor Social activity club address the gathering. Atul Vinod Duggal, Film Maker – AVD Motion Pictures, Founder Crown City Academy of Film & Television is the resource person for the event. He highlighted the importance of graphic designing, video editing, acting and social media influencing in modern era.

He interacted with the



students with an opportunity to enroll them in the J&K's first Govt. Certified film school in the said courses. Dr. Ravendra Kumar Tickoo, Principal of the college graced the occasion and appreciated the talks by the resource person. The event was attended by Dr. Sushma Chib, (Associate Professor, Department of Mathematics) Dr. Surinder Singh Parihar (Convener IQAC),

Dr. Anjali Abrol (Associate Professor, Department of Chemistry), Dr. Nitu Sharma (Assistant Professor, Department of Home Science), Dr. Sushma Sharma (Assistant Professor, Department of Chemistry) and Dr. Atiya Syed (Assistant Professor, Department of Chemistry). The vote of thanks was formally presented by Dr. Manjulla Gupta (Assistant Professor, Department of Chemistry).

## ADM Ansuya Jamwal cautions students against peer pressure, lure of drugs

■ HT News Network

JAMMU, MARCH 3: As part of the ongoing efforts to curb the rising menace of drug abuse, the District Administration Jammu, under the guidance of District Magistrate Sachin Kumar Vaishya, today organised an Information, Education and Communication campaign at Government Boys High School, Bansultan, Miran Sahib. The campaign was presided over by Additional District Magistrate Ansuya Jamwal.

The initiative is part of a three-month-long IEC campaign aimed at spreading awareness and educating the public on the dangers of substance abuse. The event featured expert lectures by psychiatrists, educators and former addicts who shared insights into the psychological, emotional and physical



consequences of drug addiction. Addressing the gathering, ADM Jamwal emphasised the need for collective action to tackle drug abuse at the grassroots level. She urged parents to remain vigilant and proactive in preventing children

from falling into the trap of addiction.

"Society must come together and openly discuss ways to prevent the infiltration of drugs into our society. Any suspicion regarding drug-related activities must be

reported immediately to the district administration, such as the Tehsildar or the Sub-Divisional Magistrate. The law ensures protection for whistleblowers," she asserted.

Highlighting peer pressure as a major factor influencing youth towards drug abuse, she stressed the importance of educating children about resisting such influences. "We must act together as a society to stop this gradual descent of our nation into drug abuse. The fight begins at the ground level," she added. A total of 35 awareness events were organised across multiple panchayats in the district today alone. So far, 118 events have been conducted since the campaign commenced on February 10. Over the next three months, a total of 305 such events have been planned to ensure awareness reaches every corner of the district.

## DM Sachin Kumar Vaishya urges drives against MVA violations, number plate tampering

■ HT News Network

JAMMU, MARCH 3: District Magistrate Sachin Kumar Vaishya today chaired a meeting of the District Road Safety Committee to review ongoing road safety measures and strategise future actions.

The meeting was attended by Senior Superintendent of Police Joginder Singh, SSP Traffic Faisal Qureshi, Additional District Magistrate Ansuya Jamwal, Regional Transport Officer Jasmeet Singh, Superintending Engineers from PWD, GM NHIDCL, PD NHAI Jammu-Udhampur, besides others.

During the meeting, the DM directed the RTO to conduct special enforcement drives to ensure strict



compliance with the Motor Vehicles Act, particularly in rural areas. He also called for a focussed crackdown on vehicles with obscured or tampered number plates.

Ensuring road cleanliness and maintenance was another key agenda. The DM instructed officers

from Irrigation & Flood Control Department to promptly clear desilting refuse to prevent accumulation on roads, which increases the risk of accidents. Additionally, he stressed the need to maintain functional street lights in all key areas to improve night

time visibility and safety.

The DM directed that awareness drives be conducted in schools and colleges to educate students about traffic rules and safe driving practices. Further, the Chief Medical Officer was instructed to organise block-level eye check-up camps for drivers, ensuring they meet the required vision standards.

Officers were also directed to immediately remove hazardous hoardings and obstructions that could contribute to road accidents. The Power Development Department Executive Engineers were asked to ensure the swift removal of fallen poles, if any, to prevent traffic disruptions and potential mishaps.

## ICICI Pru GIFT Select – a product with Guaranteed Income to manage current market volatility

■ HT News Network

SRINAGAR: ICICI Prudential Life Insurance has introduced 'ICICI Pru GIFT Select', a long-term savings product which offers customers guaranteed immediate income providing them with liquidity. Mr. Amit Palta, Chief Product and Distribution Officer, ICICI Prudential Life Insurance, said, "We continue to build on our legacy of innovation to meet the evolving needs of our customers with ICICI Pru GIFT Select being the latest addition to our product portfolio. This unique product allows our customers to get the benefit of guaranteed income that they can customise as per their life goals and cash flow requirements. This product offers multiple flexibilities to customers such as choosing when they want the guaranteed income to start, the duration of the guaranteed income and the amount that they can get at the time

of maturity. Additionally, the life cover component ensures financial security for the family. One of the unique features of the product is the increasing income option wherein the income increases at a compounding rate of 5% per annum, thereby helping customers to manage inflation. We recognise that in a dynamic macroeconomic environment, there could be spells of market volatility like the one that we have seen over the last couple of months. In such situations, we have seen customers preferring products that offer guaranteed returns while ensuring wealth preservation. ICICI Pru GIFT Select will enable customers to insulate their financial savings from market fluctuations and achieve their financial goals. The increasing income feature of the product can enable customers to effectively address the fear of inflation. Our commitment to deliver on the promises made to our customers is reflected in our industry.

## 21-days residential training of Yuva Aapda Mitra volunteers commences at CTI, Kot Bhalwal

### Commandant General, HG/CD & SDRF hails selfless service of the Volunteers

■ HT News Network

JAMMU, MARCH 03: A 21-days residential training programme of Yuva Aapda Mitra volunteers as "Master Trainers" (ToT) commenced at CTI Kot Bhalwal Jammu in which 100 volunteers from Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Ladakh, Chandigarh and the UT of J&K are participating.

While inaugurating the programme, S.J.M. Gillani, (DGP) Commandant General HG/CD & SDRF J&K underscored the objectivity of the training course, which is being conducted under the aegis of National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) New Delhi

at 07 different locations in the country including Central Training Institute (CTI), Kot Bhalwal. He informed the participants that the training programme is being imparted to the previously best trained volunteers under the Up-Scaling of Aapda Mitra scheme. These volunteers can assist in saving lives using the basic techniques of disaster response.

On the occasion, Commandant General held an interaction session with the trainees, who shared their experience while rendering their services to the administration and the society in their respective States/UTs during various contingencies. Commending their selfless spirit and commitment in



reaching out for relief and rescue, the Commandant General lauded the role of these young minds in pursuit of their voluntary service to the nation. He asserted that all preparations for smooth conduct of the programme have been done in consultation with Department of DMRR UT of J&K and assured the participants of best kind of services both in capacity building and during their stay in the training campus.

Later, the Commandant General HG/CD & SDRF J&K took stock of the facilities being provided to Volunteers at campus.

Atul Sharma, SSP Staff Officer to Commandant General HG/CD & SDRF J&K [Nodal Officer], Zahid Naseem Manhas, SSP,

Commandant SDRF 2nd Bn Jammu, Ms. Snober Jameel, Deputy Secretary to Govt, DMRR&R J&K, Dr. Amir Hussain, CEO, Emergency Relief Organisation DMRR&R J&K, along with other officers of SDRF and other allied departments also attended the inaugural function.

In the end, Principal CTI Kot Bhalwal Jammu gave a brief about the 21 days training which was followed by a lunch served to the trainees. Later, the Commandant General HG/CD & SDRF J&K took stock of the facilities being provided to Volunteers at campus.

Atul Sharma, SSP Staff Officer to Commandant General HG/CD & SDRF J&K [Nodal Officer],



# Israel agrees to US proposal to extend Gaza ceasefire for Ramadan, passover

■ [HT News Network](#)

TEL AVIV, Mar 2 : The United States proposed a new plan for a temporary ceasefire in the Gaza Strip, since it is currently impossible to overcome the differences between Israel and Palestinian movement Hamas regarding a complete end to the war, and Israel agrees to the new plan, while Hamas has so far refused, the office of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said.

The statement was issued immediately after the expiration of the agreed ceasefire in the Gaza Strip, which lasted 42 days.

"Following a security discussion chaired by Prime Minister Netanyahu and attended by the Defence Minister, senior Defence Ministry officials and the negotiating team, it was decided that Israel will accept the plan of US Special Presidential Envoy Steve Witkoff for a temporary ceasefire for the periods of Ramadan and Passover,"



the office said in a statement.

The Muslim holy month of Ramadan this year began at sunset on February 28 and ends on March 29, while the Jewish

holiday of Passover will be celebrated from April 12 to 19.

The plan calls for the release of half of the Israeli hostages, both alive and dead, from the Gaza Strip on the first day of its

implementation, and if an agreement on a permanent ceasefire is reached, all remaining abductees, both alive and dead, will be released.

"Witkoff proposed this plan to extend the ceasefire after he concluded that at this stage it was not possible to overcome the differences between the parties to end the war and that additional time was needed to negotiate a permanent ceasefire," Netanyahu's office emphasised.

The prime minister's office emphasised that while Israel had agreed to the new US plan for the return of the abductees, Hamas had so far refused to accept this scheme.

"If Hamas changes its position, Israel will immediately enter into negotiations on all the details of the Witkoff plan," the office of the Israeli prime minister concluded. The new plan also includes US agreement that Israel could resume hostilities after 42 days if it deemed negotiations for a permanent ceasefire ineffective, the office said.

## Netanyahu sends military secretary to Moscow to strengthen cooperation: Reports

■ [HT News Network](#)



TEL AVIV, Mar 2: Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu sent his military secretary, Maj. Gen. Roman Gofman, to Moscow to coordinate and strengthen cooperation, taking into account security interests, the Ynet portal reported on Saturday, citing its sources.

Gofman is expected to hold a series of meetings on security issues, the publication said.

According to the portal, another goal of the trip will be a request to Russia to put pressure on Palestinian movement Hamas through intermediaries to advance a deal to release Israeli hostages from the Gaza Strip, among whom is still being held, including the son of a Russian citizen, Maxim Kharkin.(UNI)

## Bangladesh's top court upholds acquittal of Khaleda Zia in corruption case

■ [HT News Network](#)

DHAKA, Mar 3: Bangladesh's Supreme Court on Monday upheld a High Court ruling that acquitted former premier and BNP chairperson Khaleda Zia in a corruption case in which she was sentenced to seven years in jail by a lower court.

A three-member Appellate Division bench headed by Justice Md Ashfaqul Islam passed the order, dismissing the plea filed by the state and the Anti-Corruption Commission challenging the High Court verdict that acquitted Zia and others, the state-run BSS news agency reported.

Zia, 79, was convicted in the Zia Charitable Trust corruption case in 2018 by a Dhaka court. The court sentenced her to seven years imprisonment and



fined her Taka 1 million.

On November 27 last year, the High Court allowed two separate appeals filed by Zia and two other convicts, Ziaul Islam and Monirul Islam Khan, challenging the lower court conviction and sentence in the Zia Charitable Trust graft case and acquitted them of the charges.

The state and the ACC filed the plea, challenging the High Court ruling.

That matter came to the Appellate Division's regular

bench for hearing and the apex court passed its order on Monday, the news agency reported.

The graft case filed in 2011 by the Anti-Corruption Commission with Tejgaon Police Station accused Zia and three others of abusing power to raise funds for the trust from unknown sources.

Zia now stands acquitted in both the Zia Orphanage Trust and Zia Charitable Trust cases, in which she had previously been con-

victed and sentenced, Maksud Ullah, a lawyer for the BNP chairperson, was quoted as saying by The Daily Star newspaper.

The Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) chairperson was lodged in the Old Dhaka Central Jail on February 8, 2018, after the Dhaka court sentenced her in the Zia Orphanage Trust corruption case.

During the COVID-19 outbreak, the Sheikh Hasina-led Awami League government temporarily released Zia from jail after 776 days through an executive order, suspending her sentence on March 25, 2020, with conditions that she would stay in her house and not leave the country.

On August 6 last year, after the ouster of the Hasina regime, Zia was freed by an order of President Mohammed Shahabuddin.

## Pope had good night's rest after overcoming possible risks from respiratory crisis

■ [HT News Network](#)

ROME, Mar 3: Pope Francis had a good night's rest early Monday after apparently overcoming a setback in his recovery from pneumonia: He is stable, off mechanical ventilation and shows no sign of new infection following a respiratory crisis late last week.

"The pope rested well all night," the Vatican said in its update from Gemelli hospital, where Francis has been hospitalized since February 14.

Doctors reported the 88-year-old pope spent all day Sunday without using the noninvasive mechanical ventilation mask that pumps oxygen into his lungs that he had to use following Friday's coughing episode. Francis did continue to receive high flow supplemental oxygen through a nasal tube. Friday's respiratory crisis sparked fears of a new lung infection because Francis inhaled some vomit. Doctors aspirated it and said they needed 24 to 48 hours to determine if any new infection took hold.

On Sunday evening, they said Francis remained stable, with no fever or signs of an infection, indicating he had overcome the crisis. His prognosis remained guarded, however, meaning he wasn't out of danger.

Francis on Sunday also received a visit from the Vatican secretary of state, Cardinal Pietro Parolin, and his chief of staff, Archbishop Edgar Pena Parra. The content of their talks wasn't known, but even when at the Vatican, Francis meets at least weekly with them.

He again skipped his weekly noon blessing to avoid even a brief public appearance from the hospital.

Instead, the Vatican distributed a message written by the pope from the 10th floor in which he thanked his doctors for their care and well-wishers for their prayers, and prayed again for peace in Ukraine and elsewhere.



"From here, war appears even more absurd," Francis said in the message, which he drafted in recent days. Francis said he was living his hospitalisation as an experience of profound solidarity with people who are sick and suffering everywhere.

"I feel in my heart the blessing' that is hidden within frailty, because it is precisely in these moments that we learn even more to trust in the Lord," Francis said in the text.

"At the same time, I thank God for giving me the opportunity to share in body and spirit the condition of so many sick and suffering people."

The Argentine pope, who had part of one lung removed as a young man, was admitted to Gemelli on February 14 after his bronchitis worsened and turned into a complex pneumonia in both lungs. On Sunday night at the Vatican, Cardinal Konrad Krajewski presided over the evening Rosary prayer in St. Peter's Square.

"Let us pray together with the entire church for the health of the Holy Father Francis," said Krajewski, who is the pope's personal Almoner, a centuries-old job of handing out alms. Francis has elevated the job to make it an extension of his own personal charity. (AP)

## Trump signs order designating English as the official language of the US

■ [HT News Network](#)

WASHINGTON, Mar 2: President Donald Trump has signed an executive order designating English as the official language of the United States.

The order allows government agencies and organizations that receive federal funding to choose whether to continue to offer documents and services in language other than English. It rescinds a mandate from former President Bill Clinton that required the government and organizations that received federal funding to provide language assistance to non-English speakers.

"Establishing English as the official language will not only streamline communication but also reinforce shared national values, and create a more cohesive and efficient society," according to the order signed by Trump on Saturday.

"In welcoming new Americans, a policy of encouraging the learning and adoption of our national language will make the United States a shared home and empower new citizens to achieve the American dream," the order also states. "Speaking English not only opens doors economically, but it helps newcomers engage in their communities, participate in national traditions, and give back to our society."

More than 30 states have already passed laws designating English as their official language, according to US English, a group that advocates for making English the official language in the United States.

For decades, lawmakers in Congress have introduced legislation to designate English as the official language of the US, but those efforts have not succeeded. Within hours of Trump's inauguration last month, the new administration took down the Spanish language version of the official White House website. Hispanic advocacy groups and others expressed confusion and frustration at the change. The White House said at the time it was committed to bringing the Spanish language version of the website back online. As of Saturday, it was still not restored.

The White House did not immediately respond to a message about whether that would happen.

Trump shut down the Spanish version of the website during his first term. It was restored when President Joe Biden was inaugurated in



## Imran Khan being kept in solitary confinement in death cell at Adiala jail, claims his party

■ [HT News Network](#)

ISLAMABAD, Mar 3: Pakistan's jailed former prime minister Imran Khan was being kept in solitary confinement in a death cell at the high-security Adiala jail in Rawalpindi, his party claimed on Monday.

Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Central Information Secretary, Sheikh Waqas Akram, made the claims during a press conference.

"Imran Khan has been kept in a death cell; he has been kept in solitary confinement," he claimed. "Khan was kept in the death cell as the undertrial prisoner before he was convicted."

He also claimed that the cell where Khan was placed was meant for terrorists.

It was shameful that the former prime minister was being treated like this with the sole purpose of breaking his will, he added.

Akram claimed that Khan's resolve was strong despite the odds.

He further said that Khan had been denied visitors, including political allies and family members, contrary to the law, which entitled him to meet lawyers and close relatives.

He also claimed that, despite a court ruling permitting six people to meet Khan, the authorities had not allowed the meetings to take place.

"The courts' orders are being disregarded. Even Imran Khan's wife has been denied meetings with him twice, and no explanation is being given," Akram said.

He said that the party had filed a contempt of court petition, but the meetings were not being allowed.

He also noted that Khan's medical consultations with his doctor have been denied, raising concerns about his well-being.

Additionally, PTI leaders have expressed frustration that Khan's books and newspapers were being withheld by the jail authorities.

Akram's claims could not be verified. Khan has been behind bars since he was arrested on August 5, 2023. (PTI)

## Former sr provincial political advisor expelled from CPC

■ [HT News Network](#)

BEIJING, Mar 3 Cui Baohua, a former senior political advisor of southwest China's Sichuan Province, has been expelled from the Communist Party of China (CPC) for serious violations of Party discipline and laws, an official statement said on Sunday.

The decision came following an investigation by the CPC Central Commission for Discipline Inspection and the National Commission of Supervision upon the approval of the CPC Central Committee.

Cui was a vice chairperson of the Sichuan Provincial Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference.

According to the statement, he was found to have resisted the investigation against him, engaged in superstitious activities, attended banquets prohibited by the Party's frugality rules, and intervened in judicial activities in violation of regulations.

He was also found to have leveraged his positions to assist others in project contracting and plan approvals, and accepted a large amount of money and gifts in return.

The investigators believe that Cui has gravely breached Party disciplines and committed serious duty-related malfeasance and the crime of taking bribes.

In line with Party regulations and laws, a decision has been made to expel him from the party and confiscate his illicit gains. The case will be referred to the procuratorate for criminal investigation and prosecution. (UNI)

## Zoe Saldana wins first Oscar, sweeping awards season as 'Emilia Pérez'

■ [HT News Network](#)

LOS ANGELES, Mar 3: Zoe Saldana earned her first Academy Award for best supporting actress in "Emilia Pérez," capping an already accomplished awards season Sunday.

"Mami! Mami!" a tearful Saldana said. "My mom is here. My whole family is here. I am floored by this honour. Thank you to the academy for recognising the quiet heroism and the power in a woman like Rita and talking about powerful women. My fellow nominees, the love and community that you have offered to me is a true gift, and I will pay it forward."

Saldana accepted the award from the reigning winner in the category, Da'Vine Joy Randolph.

The win adds to a collection of successes for the star on the awards circuit: Saldana won her first Golden Globe in January, and notched wins at the British Academy Film Awards, the Critics Choice Awards and Screen Actors Guild Awards.

"My grandmother came to this country in 1961. I am a proud child of immigrant parents. With dreams and dignity and hard working hands," Saldana said. "And I am the first American of Dominican origin to accept an Academy Award. And I know I will not be the last."





## NCC cadets join special cleanliness drive after Maha Kumbh

AGENCIES

PRAYAGRAJ, MAR 3

The cadets of Uttar Pradesh National Cadet Corps (NCC) on Monday participated in the 15-day cleanliness drive being carried out in the fair area after the Maha Kumbh, held from 13 January to 26 February at Sangam Ghat in Prayagraj, is over.

In the coming days, Civil Defence personnel and various social organisations will also contribute to the Maha Kumbh cleanliness efforts. Even after the conclusion of Maha Kumbh, the grand festival of faith, the influx of devotees to Prayagraj continues.

To ensure that the Sangam banks remain clean and well-maintained for pilgrims taking a holy dip, a special cleanliness drive is being carried out under the direction of Special Executive Officer Akanksha Rana. As part of this initiative, 30 cadets from UP NCC actively participated in the cleanliness campaign.

Naib Subedar Gurubachan Singh of UP NCC said that his battalion contributed to the ongoing cleanliness campaign in Sector-21 of the fair area. He said that NCC cadets will continue to support the campaign in the coming days. The event was also attended by Sector Medical Officer Dr Mahendra Tripathi and Deputy Fair Officer Shubham Srivastava.

On behalf of the fair administration, the Deputy Mela Officer expressed gratitude to UP NCC for their commitment to the cleanliness initiative. He also announced that in the coming days, Civil Defence and other social organisations will also join the cleanliness drive, further strengthening efforts to keep the Maha Kumbh fair area clean and welcoming for visitors.

## Two ladies from Bihar sent to police remand in Tripura

AGENCIES

AGARTALA, MAR 3

A local court in West Tripura on Monday sent two women hailing from Bihar to two days of police remand after being booked under the Narcotic Drug and Psychotropic Substance (NDPS) Act.

They were arrested on Sunday night from Agartala Railway station by General Railway Police (GRP) with a huge quantity of drugs.

Police said two women from Bihar identified as Sunita Debi (48) from Patna district and Rita Debi (35) from Vaishali district, were seen moving suspiciously in the station while waiting for the train. The GRP personnel on the lookout for movement detained the ladies and during a search of two big bags around 21.065 kg of dry cannabis worth Rs 3.5 lakh was recovered.

"Investigation is going on to track the interstate drug smuggling network and the supply chain," said police.

## Suspecting fidelity, man shoots wife to death in TN's Coimbatore, then himself in Kerala

AGENCIES

COIMBATORE (TAMIL NADU), MAR 3

Suspecting fidelity of his wife, a 54-year-old man shot dead his wife with a country-made pistol at Pattanam in Coimbatore and later ended his life by shooting himself in his house at Vandazhi village in Palakkad district of Kerala on Monday.

Police said the deceased were identified as Sangeetha (42), who was working as a Kindergarten coordinator at a private public school in Kovilpalayam in Coimbatore and her husband Krishnakumar hailing from Kerala.

The couple had a frequent quarrel after Krishnakumar suspected that his wife was in an extra-marital relationship.

There was a heated argument between them over the issue this morning, after their two children had gone to the school.

Enraged over the squabble, Krishnakumar shot Sangeetha on her chest leaving her dead on the spot.

## TN: Miscreants vandalise two stone idols in temple

AGENCIES

DINDIGUL, MAR 3

Unidentified miscreants vandalised two stone idols in Sri Rama Perumal Temple at Lakshmi Nagar on the Dindigul-Karur road in Dindigul district of Tamil Nadu in the wee hours of Monday.

Police said the idols of deities of Lord Ganesha and Lord Sri Garudalwar were found damaged in the respective shrines, when the priest opened the temple this morning for performing routine pujas.

Police visited the temple and examined the CCTV footage collected from the nearby places to identify and arrest the culprits.

Thadikombu police have registered a case and are investigating.

# PM Modi reiterates to protect and preserve biodiversity

AGENCIES

NEW DELHI, MAR 3

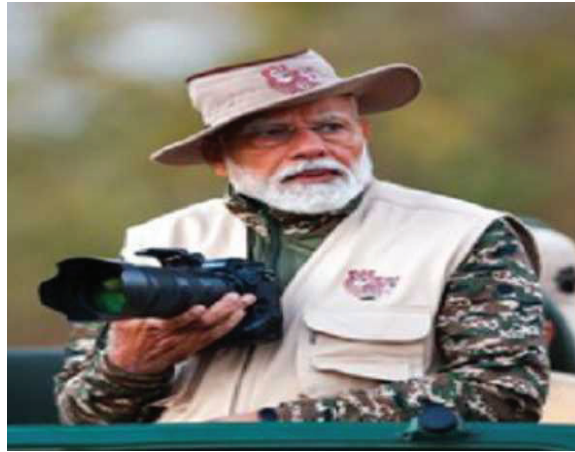
Prime Minister Narendra Modi called upon the people to protect and preserve biodiversity, saying, "Every species plays a vital role. Let's safeguard their future for generations to come."

The Prime Minister made these remarks today as "World Wildlife Day" is being celebrated today to raise awareness about the importance of wildlife and biodiversity.

In a social media post, he said, "Today, on #WorldWildlifeDay, let's reiterate our commitment to protect and preserve the incredible biodiversity of our planet. Every species plays a vital role—let's safeguard their future for generations to come."

"We also take pride in India's contributions towards preserving and protecting wildlife," he wrote.

In 2025, World Wildlife Day will be celebrated under the critical theme of "Wildlife Conservation Finance: Investing in



People and Planet." The year 2025 will also coincide with the 50th anniversary of the entry into force of CITES.

Sharing the same sentiments, Union Environment Minister Bhupender Yadav also urged to safeguard the vibrant biodiversity and said, as custodians of Planet Earth, it is incumbent upon us to safeguard every species for generations to come.

"On World Wildlife Day, I urge everyone to reiterate our shared commitment to protect and preserve the vibrant biodiversity we have been

bestowed with. Every species plays a vital role in Earth's ecosystem, and as custodians of Planet Earth, it is incumbent upon us to safeguard their future for generations to come. Warm wishes on #WorldWildlifeDay" he wrote on X.

India is part of several global biodiversity hotspots, such as the Western Ghats, the Himalayan region, and the Indo-Burma region. These areas are rich in unique species of plants, animals, and ecosystems, and are crucial for maintaining global biodiversity.

## EAM visiting UK, Ireland from March 4-9 to enhance ties

AGENCIES

NEW DELHI, MARCH 3

External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar will be visiting the United Kingdom and Ireland from March 4-9, during which he will be holding talks with his counterparts from both nations and other senior officials.

India and the UK share a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership, which has strengthened across diverse areas including Defence & Security, Trade & Economy, Health, Education, People-to-people ties.

During the visit, EAM will be holding discussions



with his counterpart, Foreign Secretary David Lammy and will meet several other dignitaries as well as Indian community members, a statement said.

The visit also comes days after both sides renewed talks on an ambitious FTA, with the visit of the UK Business and Trade Secretary Jonathan Reynolds to India late last month.

The UK Energy Secretary Ed Miliband was also on a visit to India to participate in the fourth UK-India Energy Dialogue.

India and Ireland share friendly bilateral relations based on shared democratic values, cultural ties and growing economic engagements.

EAM will be meeting with his Irish counterpart, Simon Harris, other dignitaries and members of Indian community, during his visit to Ireland on March 6-7.

EAM's visit will provide renewed impetus to India's friendly ties with both UK and Ireland, a statement said.

## Opposition stages walkout from Bihar assembly on various issues

AGENCIES

PATNA, MAR 3

The opposition members on Monday staged a noisy walkout from the Bihar Assembly during pre-lunch sitting after raising various issues.

The opposition members raised various issues including increase in the amount of monthly social security pension, construction of boundary walls around Kabristan (graveyard) and rape of a girl of Sasaram in Banaras. As soon as the house assembled for the day, the CPI-ML members along with some other members of the opposition parties raised the issues of the rape of a girl of Sasaram in Banaras and also tried to draw the attention of the house towards their demands for increase in the monthly social security pension.

Speaker Nand Kishore Yadav, however asked them to raise their issues at appropriate time and took up the question hour.

While replying to the



starred question of Rajesh Kumar, Bihar Energy Minister Vijendra Yadav said that the members can repair and maintain the graveyards from their respective area development funds.

Kumar through his supplementary question said that it was a general fact that the boundary walls constructed around the graveyards get damaged and demanded for renovation of the graveyards.

He asked the Minister to amend the existing rules for getting the boundary wall repaired through MLA area development funds as there is no such provision for development of religious places through

MLA area development funds.

To this, Yadav said that the MLA can ask the district magistrate of the area for the purpose.

Visibly annoyed with the reply of the Minister, the opposition shouted slogans and created noise. The opposition members, dissatisfied with the reply of the Minister regarding construction of boundary walls around graveyards trooped to the well and shouted slogans against the government.

The members of the RJD demanded an increase in the social security monthly pension from Rs 400 1500 given to the widows and disabled.

# Delhi Budget will fulfill aspirations of people: CM

AGENCIES

NEW DELHI, MAR 3

Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta on Monday said that the upcoming Delhi budget will be a "people's budget" which will fulfill the aspirations of the people.

Addressing a press conference here, she said the budget would focus on the development of Delhi as per the poll promise.

The Chief Minister also invited public suggestions which will be included in the budget.

Citing the poll promises, She said Rs 2,500 monthly to the poor women, expansion of healthcare, transport services, Yamuna cleaning, and the welfare of senior citizens and added their target is to make a budget that fulfills pledges. "We will seek the people's suggestions and include them in the budget," Gupta said.

She gave an email (viksitdelhibudget-25@delhi.gov.in) and a phone number (9999962025) and invited people to submit their suggestions



for the budget. The Chief Minister said there is a website for the people's suggestions.

Rekha Gupta said that women's organizations have been invited on March 5 so that they can give their suggestions.

On the same day, people associated with the education world have also been invited for suggestions.

Apart from this, people from business organizations have been invited for suggestions on March 6.

She said that preparations are being made to present the Delhi budget between March 24 and March 26 and added that the budget of developed Delhi will be presented by incorporating suggestions from all sections.

The Chief Minister said that he will have budget dialogues with people from all areas and take suggestions from them. On that basis, he will prepare the budget for the development of Delhi. Rekha Gupta said that all the promises made in the manifesto will be fulfilled.

She said that all the department officials have been instructed to take suggestions from all sections and include those in the budget.

The Chief Minister said that all the MLAs and Ministers will go to the public to know their views on the upcoming budget.

"We are committed to fulfilling all the promises made in our manifesto", she added.

## Does not endorse statements that undermine sporting icons' legacy: Cong

AGENCIES

NEW DELHI, MAR 3

The Congress on Monday distanced itself from the remarks made by its spokesperson Shama Mohammed on cricketer Rohit Sharma, saying the "party holds the contributions of sporting icons in the highest regard and does not endorse any statements that undermine their legacy."

On his social media handle X, senior party leader Pawan Khera said that the remarks does not reflect the party's position and has asked Shama Mohammed to delete the post from her handle.

"Dr Shama Mohammed, National Spokesperson of the Indian National Congress, made certain remarks about a cricketing legend that do not reflect the party's position," Khera said in a



post on X.

He said, "She has been asked to delete the concerned social media posts from X and has been advised to exercise greater caution in the future."

"The Indian National Congress holds the contributions of sporting icons in the highest regard and does not endorse any statements that undermine their legacy," Khera said.

It may be mentioned

that the Congress leader in a now-deleted post on X had referred to Indian cricket team captain Rohit Sharma as "fat for a sportsman" and suggested that he should lose weight.

She had even called him the "most unimpressive captain India has ever had."

Her remarks had not gone down well with Rohit Sharma's fans and cricket enthusiasts, leading to backlash from them.

## Ex Sebi Chairperson, 5 others move Bombay HC against special court order directing FIR

AGENCIES

MUMBAI, MAR 3

Former Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) Chairperson Madhabi Puri Buch, along with five others on Monday moved the Bombay High Court, seeking to quash the recent order of a special court directing to register an FIR against them for alleged stock market fraud.

In her petition, Buch had challenged the special court order passed on a complaint made by a journalist alleging that Sebi officials had allowed the listing to proceed without adhering to the SEBI Act, 1992, as well as key regulatory frameworks such as the SEBI (ICDR) Regulations, 2018, and the SEBI



(LODR) Regulations, 2015.

The complainant further accused the officials of facilitating market manipulation, insider trading, and artificial inflation of share prices, leading to significant investor losses.

The petition was mentioned before Justice S.G. Dige this morning seeking urgent hearing which

he agreed to it and listed the matter for hearing on Tuesday.

Solicitor General Tushar Mehta appeared through Video Conferencing on behalf of the Sebi officials implicated in the matter, while Senior Advocate Amit Desai appeared for the two Bombay Stock Exchange (BSE) officials named in the case.



## Alzheimer’s disease: Researchers discover role of key protein

AGENCIES  
NEW DELHI

Researchers have made a significant breakthrough in understanding the role of the tau protein in Alzheimer’s disease.

Using human induced pluripotent stem cells (iPSCs), a research team at the University of Cologne in Germany has been able to show that a specific form of the tau protein, known as the IN4R isoform, is responsible for mediating the toxic effects of protein clumps in human brain cells.

The study, published in the Alzheimer’s & Dementia journal, was led by Dr Hans Zempel from the Institute of Human Genetics, who is also a group leader in the Career Advancement Program (CAP) at the Center for Molecular Medicine Cologne (CMMC) of the University of Cologne



and University Hospital Cologne.

If a person suffers from Alzheimer’s disease, certain proteins accumulate in brain cells, forming clumps that restrict normal cell function or even cause the cell to die.

Dr Buchholz and Dr Zempel’s team have used state-of-the-art techniques

such as CRISPR/Cas9 gene editing and live-cell imaging in human induced pluripotent stem cells (iPSCs) to demonstrate that the IN4R tau isoform is responsible for the pathological effects on the cell. iPSCs are human stem cells that are generated from other cells.

For example, skin cells

can be reprogrammed into iPSCs and from there transformed into brain cells (neurons).

The researchers tested different forms of the tau protein by expressing them specifically in nerve cells.

In this way, the researchers were able to analyse how each protein isoform affects the cell.

According to Dr Sarah Buchholz, this study represents a significant advance in helping us to understand the mechanisms of Alzheimer’s disease.

“By identifying IN4R tau as a key protein, we have discovered a potential new target for future treatments,” Buchholz noted.

The study’s interdisciplinary approach not only helps to better understand Alzheimer’s disease but also demonstrates the importance of human cell models in neurodegenerative research.

## Scientists identify blood metabolites behind early childhood development

AGENCIES  
TORONTO

A team of researchers has identified small molecules in the blood that may impact early childhood development.

The McMaster University team shows how dietary exposures, early life experiences, and gut health can influence a child’s growth and cognitive milestones.

The team collaborated with Brazilian scientists to conduct an untargeted metabolomic analysis of blood samples taken from more than 5,000 children between the ages of six months and five years as part of the Brazilian National Survey of Child Nutrition study.

They found several metabolites - small molecules that are by-products of human metabolism and microbial fermentation, known as uremic toxins - were inversely



associated with developmental outcomes.

Metabolites play important roles in human health especially at early stages of life.

“Our findings reveal the complex connections between diet, gut health and a child’s developmental progress,” explained Philip Britz-McKibbin, a professor in the Department of Chemistry and Chemical Biology.

By identifying specific metabolites related to a child’s overall development, we can gain a deeper understanding of how potentially modifiable risk factors might support optimal growth and cognitive development in children, he mentioned in the study published in the journal eLife.

The researchers focused on metabolites

in the bloodstream that were correlated to early stages of cognitive development, using a measure called the Developmental Quotient (DQ).

The World Health Organization uses the measure to determine whether children are meeting age-appropriate milestones in social and cognitive development.

This approach led to the identification of several bioactive metabolites most often associated with chronic kidney disease, suggesting that even a modest increase in their concentrations may contribute to inflammation and developmental delays in early childhood.

“What’s interesting is that many of these metabolites are linked to the gut-brain axis, suggesting that a healthy gut microbiome could play a critical role in a child’s cognitive and social development,” said Britz-McKibbin.

## India's preventive healthcare market doubles in size in last 4 years: Zerodha’s Nikhil Kamath

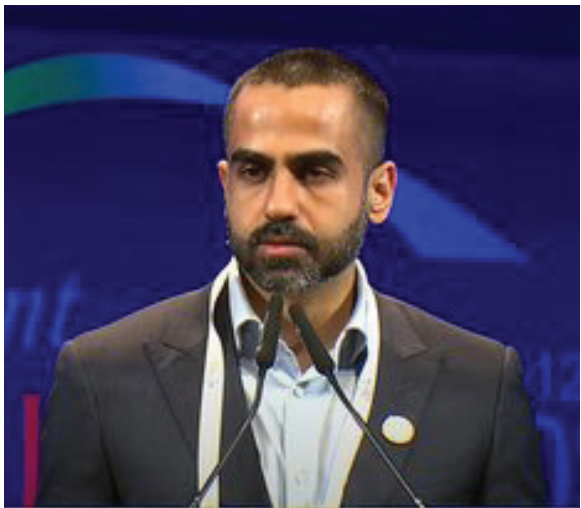
AGENCIES  
NEW DELHI

India’s preventive healthcare market has doubled in size in the past four years, with ‘wellness and fitness’ alone contributing \$98 billion and occupying a major 51 per cent of the total market size, according to Nikhil Kamath, Co-founder at Zerodha.

Preventive healthcare also has a massive opportunity to make money with the projected size of the market to hit \$197 billion, which is around Rs 8 lakh crore by 2025.

“Everything health-related in the last decade felt like it was too early. This seems to be changing now, with health and longevity becoming mainstream in urban India,” Kamath posted on X social media platform.

According to the data



shared in the post, live fitness content consumption has increased as much as 1,300 per cent since Covid pandemic times, which, completely transformed the world’s view on health.

It is this growing consciousness that India is going to benefit from. The post further substanti-

ated the potential growth of the fitness industry by comparing the under penetration of wearables and gym goes in India with the world.

As per 2021 data, according to Kamath’s post, 114 units of fitness wearables is sold per 10,000 people in India as compared to

the global average of 645.

This makes the fitness wearable sale 82 per cent lesser in India against the global number.

Indians on an average spend anywhere between Rs 4,000 to Rs 10,000 annually on preventive healthcare. Preventive healthcare includes exercise, healthy nutrition, health insurance, early diagnosis and health tracking, according to his post.

Another insight from the post revealed that India lags far behind in gym subscriptions, with 0.2 per cent of the world’s total tally.

“Moreover, not only do we have the least gym subscriptions in the world but over 50 per cent gym members aren’t regular. The data also highlighted that India currently has 96,278 gyms in total,” according to the data.

## Ramadan 2025: The Role of Fasting and Its Significance Explained

As Ramadan fasting began today, March 2, 2025, in India, and in Saudi Arabia on March 1, Muslims around the world enter a month of deep spiritual reflection and devotion. Fasting during Ramadan 2025 is more than just abstaining from food and drink; it is a time to strengthen one’s relationship with God, purify the soul, and practice self-discipline.

### Why Fasting Matters

Fasting during Ramadan is a way to achieve spiritual growth and control one’s desires. For Muslims, fasting is not only a physical act but a means of connecting deeply with their faith. During the month of Ramadan, Muslims fast from dawn to sunset, refraining from food, drink, and other physical needs. This practice helps them reflect on their actions, purify their hearts, and build empathy for those less fortunate by



experiencing hunger and thirst.

### A Time for Reflection

The goal of fasting in Ramadan is to grow spiritually and develop a sense of discipline. It is also a reminder to stay away from bad habits and

avoid negative thoughts. Muslims use this time to engage in prayer, worship, and charity, seeking to become better versions of themselves. Fasting is a reminder of the importance of gratitude, self-control, and inner peace.

### Revelation of the Quran

Ramadan holds special significance as it marks the time when the Quran was first revealed to Prophet Muhammad. This connection between fasting and the Quran’s revelation reinforces the spiritual importance of the month, as Muslims dedicate themselves to worship and reflection.

### Sehri and Iftar

The day begins with Sehri, a pre-dawn meal, and ends with Iftar, a meal after sunset to break the fast. These meals not only provide nourishment but also create a sense of community, as families and friends gather to share the experience of fasting together.

Ramadan is a time for spiritual renewal, self-discipline, and gratitude. The act of fasting during this holy month is a powerful tool for deepening one’s faith and fostering compassion for others.

## How brain plays central role in development of obesity

AGENCIES  
NEW DELHI

A new study has offered intriguing new insights into the origins of type 2 diabetes and obesity, as well as the brain’s function as a critical control centre.

The hormone insulin plays a key role in the development of obesity. Up until recently, there have been numerous signs indicating insulin causes neurodegenerative and metabolic disorders, especially in the brain.

The latest study by the University Hospital of Tübingen, the German Center for Diabetes Research (DZD), and Helmholtz Munich now offers new insights.

Unhealthy body fat distribution and chronic weight gain are linked to the brain’s sensitivity to insulin. What specific functions does insulin perform in the brain, and how does it affect individuals of normal weight?

In their study, published



in the journal Nature Metabolism, Professor Dr. Stephanie Kullmann and her colleagues at the Tübingen University Hospital for Diabetology, Endocrinology, and Nephrology found the answer to this query.

"Our findings demonstrate for the first time that even a brief consump-

tion of highly processed, unhealthy foods (such as chocolate bars and potato chips) causes a significant alteration in the brain of healthy individuals, which may be the initial cause of obesity and type 2 diabetes," Kullmann explained.

In a healthy state, insulin has an appetite-suppressing effect in the

brain.

However, in people with obesity in particular, insulin no longer regulates eating behaviour properly, resulting in insulin resistance.

In the healthy study participants, the brain shows a similar decrease in sensitivity to insulin after a short-term high calorie intake as in people with obesity.

This effect can even be observed one week after returning to a balanced diet, said researchers.

Professor Dr. Andreas Birkenfeld, the study’s final author, said, "We assume that the brain’s insulin response adapts to short-term changes in diet before any weight gain occurs and thus promotes the development of obesity and other secondary diseases."

He urged more research on how the brain contributes to the development of obesity and other metabolic illnesses in light of the current findings.

## Novel tech can allow people to taste coffee in virtual reality

AGENCIES  
NEW YORK

Scientists have devised a novel technology, which intends to redefine the virtual reality experience by expanding to incorporate a new sensory connection -- taste.

The interface, dubbed ‘e-Taste’, uses a combination of sensors and wireless chemical dispensers to facilitate the remote perception of taste - what scientists call gustation.

These sensors are attuned to recognise molecules like glucose and glutamate - chemicals that represent the five basic tastes of sweet, sour, salty, bitter, and umami.

Once captured via an electrical signal, that data is wirelessly passed to a remote device for replication, according to researchers from Ohio State University in the US.

"The chemical dimension in the current VR and AR realm is relatively underrepresented, espe-



cially when we talk about olfaction and gustation," said Jinghua Li, co-author of the study and an assistant professor of materials science and engineering at Ohio State.

"It’s a gap that needs to be filled and we’ve developed that with this next-generation system," Li added.

The system, whose development was inspired by previous biosensor work of Li’s, utilises an actuator with two parts: an interface to the mouth

and a small electromagnetic pump.

This pump connects to a liquid channel of chemicals that vibrates when an electric charge passes through it, pushing the solution through a special gel layer into the mouth of the subject.

Depending on the length of time that the solution interacts with this gel layer, the intensity and strength of any given taste can easily be adjusted, said Li.

"Based on the digital

instruction, you can also choose to release one or several different tastes simultaneously so that they can form different sensations," she said. The study was published in the journal Science Advances.

Further tests assessing e-Taste’s ability to immerse players in a virtual food experience also analysed its long-range capabilities, showing that remote tasting could be initiated in Ohio from as far away as California.

Another experiment involved subjects trying to identify five food options they perceived, whether it was lemonade, cake, fried egg, fish soup or coffee.

"While these results open up opportunities to pioneer new VR experiences, this team’s findings are especially significant because they could potentially provide scientists with a more intimate understanding of how the brain processes sensory signals from the mouth," said Li.



**FA Cup: Goalkeeper Bernd helps Fulham to knock Man United out of cup**

AGENCIES

MANCHESTER, MAR 3

Fulham goalkeeper Bernd Leno was the hero with two saves in the penalty shootout to knock Manchester United out of the FA Cup.

After three precise spot-kicks from both sides, Leno denied Victor Lindelof, then, after skipper Antonee Robinson had extended Fulham's perfect record, the German also kept out Joshua Zirkzee's effort to send the Cottagers into the quarterfinals, media reports said.

Fulham had taken the lead in first-half stoppage time when Calvin Bassey was left free at the far post to head in from close range after Rodrigo Muniz had flicked on a corner, the BBC reported.

**PCB chairman Mohsin Naqvi meets young domestic cricketers ahead of NZ tour**

AGENCIES

ISLAMABAD, MAR 2

Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) Chairman Mohsin Naqvi met with top-performing domestic cricketers on Sunday, issuing immediate directives to resolve their concerns regarding fitness, skill development and diet management.

The meeting followed Pakistan's early exit from the ICC Champions Trophy, where they became the first team to be eliminated despite being the tournament hosts.

The discussion took place at the National Cricket Academy in Lahore, where young cricketers raised key issues related to high-performance training, particularly challenges in fitness management and diet planning, according to The Express Tribune report.

**India, Aus set for high-voltage SF showdown in CT**

AGENCIES

DUBAI, MAR 3

Cricketing powerhouses India and Australia are set to lock horns in the first semifinal of the ICC Champions Trophy 2025 at the Dubai International Cricket Stadium on Tuesday.

The much-anticipated encounter will determine the first finalist of the tournament.

India has been the most dominant side in the competition so far, topping Group A with an all-win record. The Rohit Sharma-led side enters the semifinal on the back of a commanding 44-run victory over New Zealand.

Shreyas Iyer's scintillating 79, complemented by Hardik Pandya's 45 and Axar Patel's quickfire 42, powered India to a strong total. In the bowling department, Varun Chakravarthy's five-wicket haul proved instrumental in sealing the win.

Rohit Sharma has struggled with consistency in the tournament so far, with scores of 41 against Bangladesh, 20 against Pakistan, and 15 against New Zealand. The team will expect a big knock from the skipper in this crucial match.

Shubman Gill, on the other hand, has been



in fine form, scoring an unbeaten 101 against Bangladesh. However, he managed 46 against Pakistan and just 2 against New Zealand. The opening partnership will be crucial in setting the tone for India's innings.

Virat Kohli will take the No. 3 spot. Despite a few underwhelming performances, he scored a century against Pakistan, proving his ability to deliver under pressure. A potential change may occur at No. 5, with Rishabh Pant possibly replacing KL Rahul. While Rahul has played some crucial knocks, including 41 against Bangladesh and 23 against New Zealand, the team may look for a more aggressive option in Pant.

Given the conditions in Dubai, the Indian team may opt for four spinners in their bowling lineup. The expected bowling attack includes Ravindra Jadeja, Axar Patel, and Kuldeep Yadav. Chakravarthy is expected to feature in India's playing XI for the semifinal against Australia, with his performance against New Zealand last night.

Former India coach Ravi Shastri has also advocated for his inclusion.

Mohammed Shami will spearhead the pace attack, while Hardik Pandya will play a dual role as a seam-bowling all-rounder. With Jadeja, Axar, and Pandya in the lineup, India's batting depth will also be an advantage.

On the other hand, Aus-

tralia had a more challenging route to the knockouts, finishing second in Group B with one win and two no-results. However, they displayed their mettle with a convincing five-wicket win against England.

Wicketkeeper-batsman Josh Inglis starred with an unbeaten 120, while Alex Carey (69) and Matthew Short (63) provided crucial contributions. The Australian bowling attack, led by Ben Dwarshuis (3 wickets), was also impressive.

In a late squad change, Australia has included spin-bowling all-rounder Cooper Connolly in their Champions Trophy squad as a replacement for opener Short, who has been ruled out with a quad injury.

Connolly, 21, who made his ODI debut in England last year, was initially named a traveling reserve for the tournament. The International Cricket Council (ICC) has officially approved Connolly's inclusion, with the Event Technical Committee confirming the replacement following Short's injury. His addition provides Australia with an extra spin option, which could be crucial on the Dubai surface.

**Rahane named KKR captain, Venkatesh Iyer deputy**

AGENCIES

KOLKATA, MAR 3

Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR) on Monday announced Ajinkya Rahane as the Captain and Venkatesh Iyer as the Vice-Captain for the upcoming 2025 season of the TATA Indian Premier League (IPL).

KKR CEO Venky Mysore expressed confidence in the leadership duo, stating, "We are delighted to have someone like Ajinkya Rahane, who brings his experience and maturity as a leader.

Also, Venkatesh Iyer has been a franchise player for KKR and brings a lot of leadership qualities. We are confident that they will

combine well as we start the defence of our title."

Rahane, who has previously captained Rajasthan Royals in the IPL, welcomed the opportunity to lead KKR. "It's an honour to be asked to lead KKR, which has been one of the most successful franchises in the IPL. I think we have an excellent and balanced squad. I look forward to working with everyone and taking up the challenge of defending our title," he said.

KKR, the defending champions, will commence their IPL 2025 campaign against Royal Challengers Bengaluru in the season opener at Eden Gardens on March 22.

**Shastri reveals India's preferred XI for semi-final clash against Australia**

AGENCIES

DUBAI, MAR 3

India finished on top of Group A following a commanding win over New Zealand in their final group fixture.

India have set themselves up a semi-final showdown against Australia after a solid 44-run win against the Black Caps in the final group-stage fixture of the Champions Trophy 2025, with the tournament now heading into the last-four phase.

Former India head coach Ravi Shastri made a call on the XI that should feature for India in the upcoming fixture against Australia, the ICC reported.

With a turnaround of less than 48 hours, and



with the side from today having an experience of the conditions, Ravi Shastri thinks India should stick with the same lineup.

"The square is a little tired at the moment, people have run on the pitch that is going to be used the day after, so the spinners will again come into play," Shastri added

on spin being the preferred route for India.

India unleashed their spin attack of Ravindra Jadeja, Axar Patel, Kuldeep Yadav and new entrant, Varun Chakravarthy on the slow track of Dubai against New Zealand, going with four spinners as Harshit Rana was rested.

A total of 37.3 overs were bowled by the spinners as they succeeded in controlling the New Zealand batting effectively, picking nine out of the ten wickets with Varun Chakravarthy leading with a five-for.

On the back of their spin bowling prowess, India managed to defend a target of 250. Shastri believed the side was capable of turning it around similarly in future fixtures.

"So if you bat first, put anything over 240-250, it's going to be very competitive in a big game like a semi-final," Shastri said.

The first semi-final of the tournament between India and Australia will take place on 4 March 2025 in Dubai.

**Australia add Cooper Connolly in squad ahead of India semi-final clash**

AGENCIES

DUBAI, MAR 3

All-rounder Cooper Connolly comes in place of the injured Matthew Short in Australia's ICC Men's Champions Trophy squad, media reports said.

Cooper Connolly will replace Short, who suffered an injury during the Afghanistan encounter in the Champions Trophy, and was seen struggling on the field, according to an ICC report.

Short injured his calf while fielding and appeared hampered



when making a quickfire 20 at the top of Australia's batting order before rain saw the match with Afghanistan in Lahore being abandoned.

"I think he'll be struggling," Australia captain Steve Smith had said of Short's injury status. "I think we saw tonight he wasn't moving very well, and I think it's probably going to be too quick

gling," Australia captain Steve Smith had said of Short's injury status. "I think we saw tonight he wasn't moving very well, and I think it's probably going to be too quick

between games for him to recover."

According to reports, Connolly has thus far featured in six internationals for Australia, of which three have been ODIs. He's a left-handed batter, who bowls left-arm spin as well.

Australia squad: Steve Smith (c), Sean Abbott, Alex Carey, Cooper Connolly, Ben Dwarshuis, Nathan Ellis, Jake Fraser-McGurk, Aaron Hardie, Travis Head, Josh Inglis, Spencer Johnson, Marnus Labuschagne, Glenn Maxwell, Tanveer Sangha, Adam Zampa.

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