



## NC to challenge Waqf Amendment Act in Supreme Court: CM Omar Abdullah

### 'Will you Allow Muslims to Run Hindu Shrines?' CM Questions Centre

■ HT News Network

**SRINAGAR, APR 9:** Chief Minister Omar Abdullah Wednesday said that the Jammu and Kashmir National Conference has decided to challenge the controversial Waqf Amendment Act in the Supreme Court of India. The decision comes in the wake of uproar within the Legislative Assembly, where opposition to the Act triggered a wave of protest by members who claimed the amendment infringes upon religious autonomy.

While talking to reporters, Omar Abdullah said, "We have taken a conscious decision

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**NC wants to protect relatives, workers who encroached Waqf land: LoP Sharma**

■ HT News Network

**JAMMU, APR 09:** Leader of Opposition in the Legislative Assembly and senior Bharatiya Janata party (BJP) leader, Sunil Sharma on Wednesday alleged that the

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**No debate in J&K Assembly over Waqf Amendment Bill huge disappointment: Para**

■ HT News Network

**JAMMU, APR 09:** PDP leader and Pulwama MLA Waheed ur Rehman Parra on Wednesday alleged that a deeper conspiracy was at play, which

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**CM's hospitality to Rijju a "signal of support to Wakf Act: Mehbooba Mufti**

■ HT News Network

**SRINAGAR, APRIL 9 :** Peoples Democratic Party President Mehbooba Mufti has launched a scathing attack on Jammu and Kashmir

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## J&K Assembly's budget session ends Speaker adjourns Assembly Sine Die

■ HT News Network

**JAMMU, APR 09:** The 21-day budget session of the Jammu & Kashmir Assembly concluded on Wednesday, with the Speaker adjourning the House sine die. The session, which began on March 3, today witnessed protests over disallowing of adjournment motions brought by National Conference and Bharatiya Janata Party, respectively, on

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## LG attends Navkar Mahamantra Divas celebration at Raj Bhavan

■ HT News Network

**JAMMU, APRIL 09:** Lieutenant Governor Shri Manoj Sinha attended the celebration of Navkar Mahamantra Divas at Raj Bhavan, today.

The Lieutenant Governor extended his felicitations to the citizens from different walks of life, members of Jain International Trade Organization, and numerous other organizations and senior



officials who have joined together for the collective

recitation of the sacred Navkar Mahamantra.

"For thousands of years, several significant 'Mantras' are guiding the path of seekers and devotees. Among them Navkar Mahamantra's aura and essence of divinity is unique," the Lieutenant Governor said.

The Lieutenant Governor observed that Navkar Mahamantra- the most revered and universal chant inspires inner transformation and

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## Will establish women centre in J&K: Farooq Abdullah

'Time has come to ensure women get their rights to build strong nation'

■ Ishfaq Aziz



**SRINAGAR, APR 09:** National Conference (NC) President Dr Farooq Abdullah on Wednesday said that the time has come to give women their rights and added that a women centre will be established in Jammu and Kashmir soon.

Talking to reporters here, Dr Farooq as per the news agency—said that the nation cannot progress until the women get their rights. "The time has come to give women their rights. The women comprise of 50 per cent of population. They should get their rights and the parliament should take immediate measures to empower them," he said. "J&K is the crown of India and we will establish a women's centre from here. I have asked for identifying the land in this regard. We will take every

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## Chief Secretary for boosting last mile connectivity under PMGSY-IV

■ HT News Network

**JAMMU, APRIL 9:** In a decisive step towards enhancing rural infrastructure, the UT Level Standing Committee (UTLSC) meeting was today convened here under the chairmanship of Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo, to review and approve critical proposals under the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana Phase-IV



(PMGSY-IV). The meeting besides Principal Secretary, Home; Secretary, PWD; Secretary, Transport; Secre

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## Police attach properties under UAPA in Sopore

■ HT News Network

**SRINAGAR, APR 09:** Police in Sopore on Wednesday said to have attached seven marlas of land belonging to two LeT terrorists/Handlers namely Bilal Ahmad Mir son of Mohammad Hamza Mir, resident of Brath Kalan Sopore and Mohammad Umar Mir son of Ghulam Hassan Mir, resident of Brath Kalan Sopore.

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## Chance meeting with Abdullahs coincidence: Rijju

■ HT News Network

**NEW DELHI, APR 09:** Union Minority Affairs Minister Kiren Rijju Wednesday said that his "chance meeting" with J&K Chief Minister Omar Abdullah and his father Farooq Abdullah at Tulip Garden was just a coincidence.

Referring to his meeting with Abdullah's which has snowballed into a major controversy, Rijju, according to the news agency—



wrote on X: "A beautiful morning walk became a political discussion, echoed even in J&K Assembly too!"

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## 2 to 3 terrorists hiding in Udhampur forest: SSP Nagpure 'Security forces exchanged fire with terrorists for more two hours; cordon tightened'

■ HT News Network

**UDHAMPUR, APR 09:** Security forces on Wednesday tightened the cordon around Marta village of Ramnagar area in Udhampur district after engaging terrorists in an encounter for more than two hours.

Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Amod Ashok Nagpure, according to the news agency—, said, "This is a very inaccessible area due to the high mountains, a river below, and a dense forest. We have the information that two to three terrorists are hiding in the middle of this jungle."

"This search operation is going on in this regard. Cur

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## Speaker forms House Committee to probe JJM irregularities in J&K Hasnain Masoodi to lead 11-member panel

■ HT News Network

**SRINAGAR, APR 09:** Speaker of Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly, Abdul Rahim Rather Wednesday formed a House Committee to investigate the alleged irregularities in the implementation of the Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) in the region.

The committee was formed following repeat-



ed demands from several members on the floor of the House.

In an official notification, a copy of which lies with the news agency—Kashmir News Observer

(KNO), Speaker Advocate Abdul Rahim Rather announced the formation of the committee, led by Hasnain Masoodi.

The panel includes eleven members from different political parties, including M.Y. Tarigami, Ali Mohammad Dar, Rajiv Jasrotia, Ranbir Singh Pathania, Tanvir Sadiq, Javaid Riyaz (Bedar), Muzaffar Iqbal Khan, Rafiq Ahmad Naik,

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## Power generation in JK increases by 44%

■ HT News Network

**SRINAGAR, APR 09:** With the frequent rainfall and improvement in weather, the hydel power generation in Jammu and Kashmir has increased by 44 percent in a month. Earlier, the Jammu and Kashmir Power Development Department was facing 84.17 percent dip in power generation owing to the low water level and was generating only 16 percent of energy.

A top official informed the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), that the Jammu and Kashmir Power

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## Tulip Garden sees 4.46 lakh visitors in 15 days, surpass previous record

■ HT News Network

**SRINAGAR, APR 09:** The Department of Floriculture, Gardens & Parks is pleased to announce that the Indira Gandhi Memorial Tulip Garden, Srinagar has surpassed last year's record footfall of 4.46,154 visitors—within just 15 days of the ongoing Tulip Show 2025.

As per an official communiqué issued to the news agency—this remarkable achievement marks a new milestone for Asia's largest tulip garden, which currently features 1.7 million tulip bulbs across 74 vibrant varieties.



With several days of the show remaining, the garden is on track to achieve an unprecedented visitor turnout.

This surge in footfall highlights the garden's growing

global appeal and its key role in promoting tourism and showcasing the natural splendour of Jammu & Kashmir.

Pertinently, with 1.7 million bulbs, the garden was thrown

open for the general public on March 26. The famous Indira Gandhi Memorial Tulip Garden is having two more varieties imported from the Netherlands this year. 100 gardeners and casual labourers have made hectic efforts to complete all the processes and make the garden ready for the public.

On the inaugural day (March 26), the garden witnessed an overwhelming response from tourists. It recorded an unprecedented footfall of 17,259 visitors, setting a new record.

Pertinently, 4.5 lakh visitors visited the garden last year,

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## Govt restricts four key surgeries under PM-JAY to public hospitals to 'combat malpractice'

### No plans for new polytechnic in Qazigund, says Dy CM

■ HT News Network

**SRINAGAR, APR 09:** The Jammu and Kashmir government has reserved four key surgical procedures exclusively for public hospitals, aiming to enhance transparency, reduce unnecessary medical interventions and curb malpractice under the Ayushman Bharat/PM-JAY scheme.

Responding to a query raised by MLA Tanvir Sadiq, the Minister for Health and Medical Education, Sakina Itoo, as reported by the news agency—



informed the Assembly that the government has decided to reserve cholecystectomy, laparoscopic hemorrhoidectomy, appendectomy and fissure-in-ano surgeries for public sector hospitals only.

"This decision follows an advisory (Anti-Fraud Advisory No. 17, dated 29 June 2020) issued by the National Health

Authority (NHA), which flagged instances of fraudulent and unnecessary procedures being carried out in private hospitals. By restricting these surgeries to public hospitals, the government aims to ensure ethical medical practices, quality treatment and safeguard beneficiaries from exploitation," the minister said.

She said this move is in line with similar best practices adopted across various States and Union Territories and further strengthens patient safety protocols.

Public hospitals in J&K have

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# Asian Paints Apex Ultima celebrates Kashmir's artistic heritage with 'Aks-e-Kashmir'

## ■ HT News Network

SRINAGAR, Apr 9: Kashmir is a land of breath-taking beauty, where nature inspires art and tradition. Asian Paints honors this region with a special Apex Ultima weather-proof pack, capturing the essence of Kashmir's rich culture and timeless artistry.

For decades, Apex Ultima has set the standard in exterior paints by offering unmatched protection against the harshest weather conditions. With this special festive edition pack, Asian Paints brings the soul of Kashmir to life. It blends the region's artistic heritage

with cutting-edge performance. Released in the spirit of Eid, the pack symbolizes new beginnings, cherished memories, and the warmth of togetherness.

The pack's design beautifully showcases Kashmir's most cherished symbols—the serene shikaras on Dal Lake, vibrant tulip gardens, intricate Pashmina embroidery, hand woven textiles and elegant botanical gardens. Iconic elements like Kahwa vessels, Mughal Baari, saffron flowers, and gondolas further capture its rich heritage. The design reflects the warmth, pride, and cultural richness that define the Valley. It is a fitting



tribute during the season of reflection and renewal that Eid brings. Inspired by traditional embroidery, detailed woodwork, and hand woven textiles, every detail of this pack tells a story of craftsmanship, heritage and pride. "Kashmir is more than a place — it's a feeling, alive in its stories, colours, and traditions that reflect resilience, beauty, and heritage," said Amit Syngle, MD & CEO of Asian Paints. "With the Apex Ultima Aks-e-Kashmir special edition pack, we are not only celebrating the region's culture and craftsmanship, but also honouring the spirit of its people, their perseverance and the legacy they

continue to build."

Speaking more about the product and initiative, Syngle added, "Apex Ultima is engineered to shield homes from India's extreme weather conditions ensuring that every home's beauty and durability is maintained. By bringing together strong performance with the artistic essence of Kashmir, this special edition pack captures the unique blend of strength and elegance that defines the valley's cultural spirit." Through the Aks-e-Kashmir pack, Asian Paints preserves and shares Kashmir's heritage, continuing its tradition of celebrating India's diverse cultures.

## CONTINUE FROM FRONT PAGE.....

### CM

to move the Supreme Court against the Waqf Amendment Act. The Speaker did try to calm the legislators and make them understand the implications, but the members stood their ground and were firm in their opposition."

The Chief Minister as per the news agency Kashmir News Trust said it is not just the people of Jammu and Kashmir who are dismayed, but voices of concern are rising from across India. "There is a widespread feeling that the government is interfering in religious matters, particularly those of the Muslim community," he said.

Omar Abdullah firmly defended the legislators who had opposed the Act inside the House, stating that their reaction was a reflection of public sentiment. "People elect us to represent their voice. When that voice expresses discomfort over a law, it is our responsibility to highlight that concern. The members are not wrong, and we are all disappointed with this Act," he said.

In a strongly worded criticism, Omar questioned the legitimacy of allowing non-Muslims to oversee the affairs of the Waqf. "Will you allow Muslims to manage the Shri Mata Vaishno Devi shrine? Will you accept a non-Sikh meddling into the affairs of the Shri Gurudwara Prabandhak Committee? If not, then how can it be justified to have non-Muslims dictate the functioning of Waqf institutions?" he asked.

The Chief Minister said the Act is seen as a targeted move against a particular religion. "This is not just about administrative control; it's about religious sanctity. The Waqf deals with endowments and religious properties meant for Muslims. Bringing non-Muslims into its administrative setup is not just illogical but deeply insensitive," he added.

Omar Abdullah said the NC will stand by the sentiments of the people and take the legal route to challenge what he called "a deeply flawed and discriminatory law." [KNT]

### LOP

National Conference (NC) leaders are trying to shield their relatives and workers, who have encroached on the Waqf land.

Talking to reporters here, Sharma as per the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), said, "NC is least concerned about Waqf bill. It is trying to divert the attention as the party leaders want to protect their relatives and workers, who have encroached the lands." He said that NC is calling it as a 'land jihad' in Kashmir."

He added that the 'land jihad' is getting legislative protection, which he said is a 'Legislative Jihad'.

Pertinently, the Legislative Assembly witnessed disruptions for the third straight day on Wednesday with the NC MLAs protesting over the Waqf Amendment Bill in the House while as the Speaker Abdul Rahim Rather rejected the discussion over it, saying that the matter is already sub-judice—

### PARRA

prevented crucial issues concerning Jammu and Kashmir including Waqf Amendment Bill from being discussed in the legislative assembly.

"Unfortunately, the entire session was held according to the BJP's agenda. The Waqf Amendment Bill should have been debated thoroughly, as happened in Karnataka and Tamil Nadu. We had expected strong opposition here, considering that Jammu and Kashmir is a Muslim-majority region. That didn't happen—and it's a huge disappointment," Parra told the KNO outside the Assembly Secretariat.

He added that several other critical issues were also deliberately sidelined. "There was

a bill on daily wagers, a bill on property rights, a bill on the rationalization of reservations, and even a bill on statehood. All of this was left in disarray because the NC refused to allow a debate on the Waqf issue or to pass a resolution against the bill. That destroyed everything."

Asked about the pandemonium witnessed on the floor of the House on the last day of the budget session, particularly his verbal spat with Aam Aadmi Party MLA Mehraj Malik, Parra was guarded in his response and termed the ruckus as "an issue of least importance."

"I think the most important thing at a larger level is the Waqf issue. Unfortunately, on the last day of the session—after six years—we were finally looking forward to an elected government, to an assembly session where debates and discussions could be held, breaking the long silence in Jammu and Kashmir. But the most sensitive issue, the Waqf Amendment Bill, was brushed aside. India is the second-largest Muslim country, and Jammu and Kashmir is its largest Muslim-majority region. We expected a threadbare discussion and a resolution against the bill. Unfortunately, that didn't happen—and that's our biggest disappointment with this House."

Asked again about the altercation with Mehraj Malik, Parra downplayed the incident: "Such things happen. Small issues arise—there are many sensitive matters being dealt with. We don't want to shift focus to the actions of one member. For us, the larger issues—especially the Waqf Amendment Bill—are far more important."

### MEHBOBA

Chief Minister Omar Abdullah and the Bharatiya Janata Party over the controversial Waqf Amendment Act, accusing them of undermining Muslim interests and promoting alienation.

Speaking to reporters, Mufti said, "The BJP is attacking Muslims of the country left, right, and centre. The drama that has unfolded in the assembly over the past three days, and the events at the Tulip Garden, are nothing short of shameful. By rolling out the red carpet for Union Minister Kiren Rijiju, the Chief Minister has sent a clear message that the J&K government endorses the Waqf Amendment."

Mufti's criticism follows the recent visit of Rijiju to Kashmir, which coincided with heightened political tensions in the Assembly over the Waqf law. The law, passed by Parliament, has sparked protests from Muslim legislators who view it as an encroachment on religious autonomy, allowing non-Muslims to intervene in Waqf affairs—an area traditionally administered within the community.

Earlier, Mehbooba took to the social media platform X, where she accused the BJP of bulldozing the Waqf Amendment Bill through Parliament and criticized the timing and optics of Rijiju's Kashmir visit. "He was welcomed by the CM of India's only Muslim-majority state, in what appeared to be a calculated move to signal to India's 24 crore Muslims that their concerns don't matter," she posted.

"The Tulip Garden reception felt like a public celebration of the community's marginalisation and disempowerment. The Chief Minister's actions have deepened the feeling of helplessness among Muslims and added legitimacy to a law widely seen as dismissive of their rights," Mufti added.

With the ongoing Assembly session potentially nearing its conclusion, Mufti urged the ruling alliance to drop the theatrics and focus on passing a resolution against the Waqf Amendment Bill. "Instead of prolonging this political spectacle, the House must take a stand and reject the bill officially," she said. [KNT]

### LG

fosters spiritual awakening.

"Where there is love and harmony there is God. It is true power. A man is closest to God when heart is filled with goodwill. It is my firm belief that the most precious assets of society are love, harmony, peace and compassion. A person full of these qualities can uplift humanity."

I believe that the true meaning of life lies in self-discovery. When we know ourselves then one thing becomes clear that God has not given this life for small things but there is a big purpose behind it and that is selfless service to society and welfare of all living beings," the Lieutenant Governor said.

In a global initiative, people from more than 108 countries participated in 'Navkar Mahamantra Divas' celebration promoting peace, and universal harmony. The occasion also encourages all individuals to reflect on the values of self-purification, tolerance, and collective well-being.

Shri Anand Jain, ADGP Armed Police; Shri Rajeev Jain, North India Advisor, Jain International Trade Organization (JITO); Shri Pan-kaj Jain, President SS Jain Sabha; Shri Sandeep Jain, General Secretary, SS Jain Sabha and representative JITO J&K, senior officials, and people in large number were present on the occasion.

### SPEAKER

the Waqf (amendment) bill-2025 and unemployment.

The pandemonium broke out in the House as soon as proceedings began with NC legislators standing up to insist the Speaker to allow discussion on the Waqf law.

"You should allow discussion on the Waqf bill so that we can speak up against the injustices faced by Muslims," Gurezi urged the Speaker.

He accused the BJP of playing divisive politics. "They want to divide Hindu and Muslims. They should tell people how many jobs they have provided to unemployed youth during the past 10 years," he said.

Amid protests by NC lawmakers, the Speaker announced that he has rejected an adjournment motion brought by the BJP on the issue of unemployment.

"I have rejected the adjournment motion as it doesn't pertain to the matter of urgent nature," the Speaker announced.

"The adjournment motions can be brought only on the matters of urgent nature."

The Speaker's ruling sparked protests from BJP legislators.

Shouting slogans, the BJP legislators led by leader of opposition Sunil Sharma stormed into the well of the House and staged a sit-in there.

The Speaker adjourned the House till 1:00 AM.

When the House reassembled at 1:10 AM, the Speaker defended his action of rejecting the adjournment motion on Waqf law.

He cited sub- Rule 7 and 9 of Rule 58 of the Rules of Procedure of Conduct of Business in J&K Legislative Assembly to justify his action.

The Speaker informed the House that during the Session, 1355 questions were received.

### POLICE

These actions are connected to Case FIR No. 202/2022 U/S 7/25 Arms Act, 18, 20, 23, 38 UAPA of Police Station Sopore and Case FIR No. 251/2022 U/S 4/5 Explosive Substances Act, 7/25 Arms Act, 18, 20, 23, 38 of UAPA of Police Station Sopore, a police spokesman said in a statement issued to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO).

The attachments were executed under the provisions of Sections 82, 83 of CrPC, by

a team of Sopore Police and Revenue officials, after receiving approval from the competent authority, police said.

"This measure marks a significant step in the investigation into subversive activities in the area. It underscores Police's commitment to countering threats to national security and ensuring peace and stability," the spokesman added—

### RIJIJU

I briefly came across CM, Omar Abdullah sahab and Farooq Abdullah sahab at the Tulip Garden on an early morning visit to avoid inconvenience for the visitors & tourists during the daytime."

"We exchanged pleasantries! Let's enjoy the beauty of Kashmir beyond politics!" Rijiju posted.

Notably, the opposition parties in Kashmir have taken Abdullahs head on over their "chance meeting" with Rijiju, saying the ruling National Conference had rolled out the red carpet for the "architect of anti-Muslim amendments" to the Waqf (Amendment) Act.

Rijiju had moved the Waqf (Amendment) Bill in both Houses of Parliament in the recently concluded Budget Session—

### CS

tary, Revenue; DG, Budget; Engineer-in-Chief was attended by other concerned officers from the various departments.

The Chief Secretary emphasized upon utilizing this scheme for expanding all-weather rural road connectivity to underserved areas across the Union Territory. He made out that the department should target speedy approval for all the surveyed roads.

Dulloo directed the department to prioritise these projects as per the Comprehensive New Connectivity Priority List (CNCPL) so that same receives early nod from the central government. He also advised them to ensure that the far off areas get last-mile connectivity under this flagship scheme.

The newly launched PMGSY-IV initiative, approved by the Ministry of Rural Development, aims to connect rural habitations those are eligible due to increased populations as recorded in the 2011 Census. Spanning from 2024-25 to 2028-29, this phase promises to bridge critical gaps in access to education, healthcare, markets and administrative services by giving them access through construction of all-weather roads.

About the criteria, Secretary, PWD, Bhupinder Kumar, informed that the PMGSY-IV has been structured to ensure inclusivity with population thresholds of 500+ in plains, 250+ in Hilly States/UTs and 100+ in LWE (Left Wing Extremism) affected areas.

He further elaborated that the cluster approach combines habitations within a 500-meter radius (or 1.5 km in hilly terrain) to qualify as a single entity for connectivity. In addition to sensitive border blocks, all habitations within a 10 km path distance are considered a cluster to address strategic and developmental priorities.

It was also revealed that all-weather roads under PMGSY-IV would ensure minimal service disruption with no more than 24 hours of blockage at a time and not exceeding six such instances per year. Roads previously constructed with just Stage-I formation under PMGSY-I, lacking essential pavement layers, will also be completed under the current phase.

### JJM

Arjun Singh Raju, and Iftikhar Ahmad. The committee has been tasked to look into the concerns raised by the legislators regarding the planning, execution, and overall transparency of the Jal Jeevan Mission in Jammu and Kashmir.

Pertinently, members from various parties had flagged issues related to poor execution, lack of transparency and complaints from beneficiaries in different districts—

### POWER

Development Corporation (JKSPDC) recorded a peak hydel power generation of 721 Megawatts (MWs) from the local plants.

"From the power plants of the Kashmir region, the department is currently able to produce 110 MWs of power and in case of power plants in Jammu, the peak generation is 611 MW," the official said.

The official further said that the department is likely to produce more power in the coming weeks keeping in view the water level and improvement in weather.

"Currently, we are able to produce more than 60 percent of power against the total generation capacity of 1197.4 MW," the official said.

Pertinently, till the third week of February, an official had said that Jammu and Kashmir was relying on more than 85 percent of coal and solar power amid acute deficit of hydro power generation.

### WOMENS

possible step to support them (women)," he added.

Replying to a query on opposition's statements in the Assembly, he said the enemies will always remain there, but "we will do our job and take J&K out of the problems."

### DYCM

already demonstrated their capacity, having successfully delivered 55% of total treatments under the PM-JAY scheme, including numerous surgical interventions, Itoo said, adding that this performance affirms their ability to manage the newly reserved procedures, ensuring that patients continue to receive safe and quality care without risk of overtreatment.

Responding to another query by MLA Abdul Majeed Larmi, the Deputy Chief Minister—also holding charge of the Skill Development Department—clarified that there are no plans to establish a separate polytechnic college in Qazigund.

### TULIP

surpassing all the previous records. It is worth mentioning here that Tulip Garden in summer capital earned a spot in World Book of Records (London) as Asia's largest in 2023.

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

### MILITANTS

rently, all the soldiers of all the forces and teams are fit and fine. Even though this is a tough terrain, the morale of the forces is high, and we hope that we will be successful," the SSP said, as per KNO.

He said that the security forces exchanged fire with the hiding terrorists for about two hours and the noose around them has been tightened.

Pertinently, police and security forces have been tracking terrorists moving from one area to another following three encounters since the operation started on March 24 in the Sanyial area of the Kathua district. Two terrorists and four policemen have been killed in the skirmishes during the past 17 days—(KNO)





## DC Srinagar reviews functioning of One Stop Centre Stresses proactive approach in reaching out to the women in distress, ensuring timely assistance to victims

### HT News Network

SRINAGAR, APRIL 09: With an aim to ensure effective support for women affected by violence, Deputy Commissioner (DC) Srinagar, Dr. Bilal Mohi-Ud-Din Bhat today chaired a meeting at DC Office here to review the functioning of One Stop Centre (OSC), Bemina in helping women in distress and battling any form of violence. At the outset, DC held a detailed review of the working of One Stop Centre and discussed various issues to further strengthen and broaden the activities of OSC. He directed the Officers to handle the cases of victims in a compassionate manner with extra care and precautions so that the affected women are rehabilitated with dignity. The DC directed the concerned to show proactive approach in reaching out to the women in distress and cooperation to provide timely assistance to victims with legal protection. He also



directed to spread mass awareness about the services of OSC through different kinds of IEC activities. He also stressed on increasing linkage of OSC with Police Stations. Dr Bilal assured additional support from the administration for ensuring effective and efficient functioning of

the One Stop Centre so that women in distress are provided integrated support and assistance both in private and public spaces, under one roof. The meeting was informed that as many as 727 women visited the OSC Bemina and registered complaints, out of which 310 affected women

were provided proper counseling at the centre while free legal aid was given to 188. In addition, free Medical aid has been given to 17 affected women, police assistance to 76 and shelter to 20 women victims of violence in the District. The meeting was also informed that women victim of domestic violence, sexual harassment, dowry demand, property dispute etc can register her complaint on National Women Helpline 181 for seeking assistance. At the outset, DC held a detailed review of the working of One Stop Centre and discussed various issues to further strengthen and broaden the activities of OSC. He directed the Officers to handle the cases of victims in a compassionate manner with extra care and precautions so that the affected women are rehabilitated with dignity. The DC directed the concerned to show proactive approach in reaching out to the women in distress and cooperation to provide timely assistance.

## Div Com Kashmir for hassle-free tourist facilities at Gulmarg

### HT News Network

SRINAGAR, APRIL 09: Divisional Commissioner (Div Com) Kashmir, Vijay Kumar Bidhuri on Wednesday chaired a meeting of officers to streamline and augment the tourist facilities for enriching their experience at the world famous tourist destination, Gulmarg. The meeting was attended by Deputy Commissioner, Baramulla; Director Tourism Kashmir; Director ULB, Kashmir; MD Cable Car Corporation; CEO, Gulmarg Development Authority; RTO Kashmir; SSP Traffic besides other concerned officers. Addressing the meeting, Div Com instructed MD Cable Car Corporation to increase the availability of online tickets for the Gondola ride from 3,400 to 5,000. He also directed the implementation of a tatkal booking system for a designated time slot one day in advance to optimize the Gondola service operations and improve crowd management. He highlighted the importance of maintaining cleanliness in the Gulmarg bowl and ensuring the collection of waste from Apharwat and Kongdoori, as well as addressing the



issue of legacy waste. Further, he directed for ensuring pothole free roads at tourist destination, regulation of traffic movement, management of parking spaces, besides enjoined for regulation of service providers. He also directed for enforcement of polythene ban at Gulmarg. Moreover, he urged all departments to collaborate effectively to provide seamless and efficient services for tourists. Further, he directed for ensuring pothole free roads at tourist destination, regulation of traffic movement, management of parking spaces, besides enjoined for regulation of service providers.

## Authorities Stop MMU Meet on Waqf Amendment Act; Mirwaiz Terms It Unjust

### HT News Network

Srinagar, Apr 9: Mirwaiz Umar Farooq on Tuesday strongly criticized authorities for disallowing a scheduled meeting of the Mutahida Majlis Ulema (MMU) on the Waqf Amendment Act, calling it "unjust" and an attempt to silence peaceful religious deliberation in a Muslim-majority region. In a post on X (formerly Twitter), Mirwaiz said, "Mutahida Majlis Ulema (MMU) important meet regarding the recent Waqf Amendment Act was not allowed to take place at my residence by authorities. Religious representatives of J&K, including from Ladakh, Kargil, and Jammu had reached the valley to attend this meet today." According to a statement issued to KNS, he expressed surprise and disappointment over the denial of space for discussion, saying, "It is strange that even a discussion to deliberate on this serious issue and respond peacefully by Muslim scholars and religious institutes in this Muslim majority region is barred." Mirwaiz highlighted that while every political party in India has expressed views freely in Parliament on the issue, the same right should be extended to Muslim political and religious representatives of Jammu and Kashmir.

As a response, MMU has decided that the joint resolution prepared in consultation with all members will be read out in mosques and religious congregations this coming Friday. Additionally, Mirwaiz announced that the MMU extends full support to the All India Muslim Personal Law Board (AIMPLB) and will stand by it in all measures it decides to take in addressing concerns related to the new law. (KNS)

## Govt. tactically skipped Waqf Bill debate to appease BJP: Hakeem Yaseem Slams CM Omar for 'Silent Surrender' on Waqf Bill

### HT News Network

Srinagar, April 9: Hakeem Muhammad Yaseen, President of the Jammu and Kashmir Peoples Democratic Front (PDF) and former minister, on Wednesday said that ruling party deliberately skipped the discussion on the controversial Waqf Amendment Bill in assembly to please BJP. In a statement issued here, Hakeem Yaseen welcomed the move by some national political parties and Srinagar MP Syed Aga Ruhullah, who individually approached the court by filing writ petitions against the bill. But he said this principled stand only exposed the Jammu and Kashmir National Conference's (JKNC)'s duplicity and dangerous silence in the Assembly. "By avoiding the debate, the NC has openly surrendered before the BJP. Their silence wasn't accidental, it was a calculated move to appease the ruling party. At a time when the people of Jammu and Kashmir expected them to resist, they chose compromise," Hakeem said. "This isn't the first time, they have mastered the art of silence over the last 70 years. And now, yet again,



they've stabbed public sentiment in the back." He said the NC's decision not to confront the bill in the legislature was nothing short of a political sell-out. "They had the numbers, the mandate, and the responsibility—but lacked the spine. Instead of confronting the bill head-on, they watched in silence as a vital institution linked to our religious and cultural identity was undermined." Taking direct aim at Chief Minister Omar Abdullah, Hakeem accused him of playing the role of a "mute spectator" when the people needed leadership the most. He remained conspicuously silent

on all major forums. Neither protested nor defended the people's interests. This silence speaks volumes, it was deliberate and complicit. The senior PDF leader also ridiculed the NC's newfound willingness to approach the courts. "Now, under public pressure, they are talking about filing writ petitions. This is damage control—an attempt to cover up their shameful conduct in the Assembly. But the people are not fools. They see through this eye-wash." Hakeem Yaseen demanded a public apology from the National Conference leadership, saying they had deceived the faith of the people who had reposed full trust in them by giving them a clear mandate. "What happened in the Assembly wasn't a lapse—it was collusion. And history will remember it as yet another chapter in the NC's long record of compromises." Hakeem Yaseen demanded a public apology from the National Conference leadership, saying they had deceived the faith of the people who had reposed full trust in them by giving them a clear mandate. "What happened in the Assembly wasn't a lapse—it was collusion.

## GMC Srinagar gets accreditation for Superspecialty course

### HT News Network

SRINAGAR, APRIL 09: In a significant development for medical education in Jammu and Kashmir, the National Board of Examinations in Medical Sciences (NBEMS) has granted accreditation to the Department of Cardiovascular and Thoracic Surgery at Government Medical College (GMC) Srinagar, for the DrNB Thoracic Surgery programme. This accreditation marks a major milestone in the development of medical education in Jammu and Kashmir, enhancing the region's capacity for specialized medical training. Principal, GMC Srinagar complimented the HOD CVTS Prof (Dr) Mohammad Akbar Bhat and other Faculty & staff of CVTS Deptt Dy Registrar Academics Prof (Dr) Mohammad Saleem Ittoo and administration of GMC Srinagar for the achievement. She said, "We are thrilled to receive this accreditation, which is a testament to the hard work and dedication of our faculty and staff. This achievement will significantly enhance our institution's reputation and provide our students with new opportunities for specialized training."

## RBI's Policy Marks Dovish Shift; HDFC Bank Predicts More Rate Cuts Amid Global Headwinds

### HT News Network

Srinagar, Apr 9, : Sakshi Gupta, Principal Economist, HDFC Bank termed the RBI's monetary policy decision as a dovish tilt. She said the combination of a 25bps rate cut along with the change in stance to accommodative is a decisive signal from the RBI that more rate cuts can be expected in the coming months. "We expect two more rate cuts in 2025, with the next rate cut likely to be delivered in the June policy. As liquidity conditions continue to improve, expected to average above neutral in the current quarter, transmission of rate cuts to money market rates and for deposit rates is also likely to increase." "Recognising the increasing global headwinds due to tariff tensions, the RBI revised down its GDP growth forecast by 20bps to 6.5%. If global tensions continue to escalate, we see a further downside risk to these projections. We expect GDP growth at 6.3% for FY26 assuming that there is some retraction in current tariff announcements with successful bilateral negotiations."

## Police facilitate PCPG meeting in Budgam

### HT News Network

Srinagar, April 9, In its ongoing efforts to address public concerns and strengthen community engagement, Police in Budgam facilitated Police Community Partnership Group (PCPG) meeting at Police Station Khag. The meeting was chaired by SHO PS Khag and was attended by respectable citizens including members of Market associations, Auqaf Bodies, Chowkidars, Numberdars, and other representatives of villages of Khag area which includes Sutharan, Lassipora, Drang, Poshkar, Segoun, Shuplian, Bansheran, Pethshara, Lakipora, Hamchipora, Trapy, Hamchipora etc.

## Director reviews progress of official language implementation at NIT Srinagar

### HT News Network

Srinagar, Apr 09: Officials at National Institute of Technology (NIT) Srinagar on Wednesday reviewed the progress of official language implementation in the fourth and last quarterly meeting of financial year 2024-2025. The meeting of the Official Language Implementation Committee (OLIC) was held at Committee Room and was presided over by Incharge Director NIT Srinagar Prof Roohi Naaz, Institute's Registrar Prof Atikur Rehman. It was convened to review the progress of Rajbhasha (official language) implementation across various departments and administrative sections of the Institute during the financial year 2024-25. The meeting was also attended by incharge Hindi Officer Dr. R.P. Shukla (Assistant Professor, Civil Engineering), Heads of Departments, Centres and sections. On the occasion, Director NIT Srinagar



Prof. Roohi Naaz appreciated the commendable efforts made by the Rajbhasha Cell and active participation of departments in promoting the use of Hindi in official work. She emphasized that the main signboards on campus will soon be made trilingual—Urdu, Hindi, and English on a priority basis to promote inclusivity and accessibility. Prof. Naaz said that the Institute's commitment to effectively implementing the directives of the Department of Official

Languages, Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA). She also discussed that there is a need for permanent posts in Rajbhasha Cell and for that communication is already under process with the department of Higher Education. Speaking on the occasion, Registrar Prof. Atikur Rehman stated that all directions issued by the Official Language Implementation Committee are being followed in letter and spirit on the campus. "Important circulars and official orders are regularly issued in bilingual format

to ensure compliance with Rajbhasha guidelines. NIT Srinagar has made significant progress in this direction, and we are confident of achieving even greater milestones in the future," he said. Hindi Officer, Dr RP Shukla informed the chair that so far 28 ministerial staff of the institute have successfully completed Prabodh Course under the Hindi teaching scheme and now have been registered in Praveen Course. "Besides these 3 employees including an Officer have qualified the last Parangat Course under the Ministry guidelines," he said. During the session, it was discussed that training sessions will be organized for more employees of the Institute in line with the Official Language Policy of the MHA. These sessions will provide basic knowledge of Hindi to enhance reading and writing capabilities for effective usage in official correspondence. The training initiative will be supervised by Mr. Mohammad Iqbal Dar, Hindi Teaching Supervisor, Rajbhasha Cell.



EDITORIAL

Denial of discussion on Waqf bill pushes NC legislators to wall

The final three days of the budget session of the Jammu & Kashmir legislative assembly turned out to be somewhat dramatic as the proceedings on all these three days were washed out due to the ruckus created by the legislators of the different political parties. The basic reason for the washout on these days was the Waqf bill that was passed by the parliament a week back.

The ruling National Conference faced embarrassment during these days as the party senior leader and the assembly speaker Abdul Rahim Rather disallowed discussion on the Waqf bill on the floor of the house. The assembly speaker said that since the issue is sub-judice the house cannot discuss it. The demand for the discussion was primarily made by the law-makers of the National Conference who had moved adjournment motions in this regard. The National Conference legislators wanted deferment of the question hour so that the Waqf bill could be discussed.

The denial of the assembly speaker for discussion on the Waqf bill provided ammunition to Bharatiya Janta Party (BJP) legislators and legislators of other parties. The BJP legislators asked the National Conference law-makers to bring a no confidence motion against the assembly speaker since he disallowed discussion on the Waqf bill. Some of the Kashmir based legislators moved a no confidence motion against the assembly speaker on the penultimate day of the session. The fate of the no confidence motion could not be known since the final day of the session also got washed out due to the ruckus on the floor of the house.

The National Conference legislators including the ministers tried their best to force the assembly speaker to allow discussion on the Waqf bill but they failed to do so much to their disappointment and dismay. Unprecedented scenes were witnessed after the National Conference legislators tried to storm the well as a mark of protest against the senior man of their own party. It remains to be seen how the party legislators will respond once they go among their own people in the Kashmir valley.

Since the Waqf bill is attached with the emotions of the Muslims across the country the National Conference legislators have been caught in a catch 22 situation as the issue was not discussed in the Jammu & Kashmir assembly. The situation is tricky since some of the assemblies of the country discussed the issue with resolutions also being passed in this regard.

Mehjoor: The Bard of Kashmir Who Revolutionized Literature and Ignited Patriotism

DR MOHIUDIN ZORE  
KASHMIRI

Introduction: Kashmir's Luminary of Letters

The verdant valleys of Kashmir have long been cradles of cultural and intellectual brilliance, nurturing heroes whose contributions have illuminated diverse spheres of life. Among these luminaries, Ghulam Ahmad Mehjoor stands tall as a revolutionary poet who redefined Kashmiri literature. His verses, infused with patriotism, social consciousness, and the ethereal beauty of his homeland, transformed Kashmiri poetry into a vehicle for both artistic expression and political awakening.

Early Life and Lineage: Roots of a Literary Visionary

Born on August 11, 1887, in the picturesque village of Mitrigam (Pulwama district), Mehjoor's ancestry traced back to the historic town of Sopore. His lineage reflects a legacy of migration and resilience: his ancestor Mir Mohmmud relocated to Srinagar in 1732, followed by his grandfather Mohi-ud-Din, who settled in Noubugh. Mehjoor's father, Abdullah, eventually moved the family to Mitrigam, where the poet was born. Tragedy struck early when Mehjoor lost his mother, Syedeeh Bagam, to cholera in 1888.

Educated initially at home, he later attended Ali Ganie's academy in Traal (1891) and the Anjuman-e-Nusratul-Islam Madrasa (1901). By 19, he adopted the pen name Mehjoor (meaning "estranged from home"), foreshadowing his journey beyond Kashmir's borders. His quest for knowledge took him to Amritsar and Lahore, where he honed calligraphy, engaged with progressive thinkers like Muhammadud-din Fauq, and absorbed influences from literary giants such as Shibli Nomani and Bismil Amritsari.

Defying Convention: From Patwari to Poet

Rejecting his family's tradition of "Peer Muridee" (spiritual mentorship), which he deemed exploitative, Mehjoor sought independence through government ser-



vice. After brief stints as a land surveyor in Ladakh and a Patwari (revenue clerk) in remote regions like Kargil and Handwara, he retired in 1945. His career, however, was marred by suspensions under the Dogra monarchy, reflecting his growing dissent against autocratic rule.

Literary Evolution: Bridging Tradition and Modernity

Initially composing in Persian and Urdu, Mehjoor shifted to Kashmiri, democratizing poetry by weaving it

into the vernacular. While his early work echoed predecessors like Rasul Mir and Habba Khatoon, he soon transcended conventional themes of love (Wachun, Ghazal) to embrace Kashmir's landscapes, socio-political struggles, and humanist ideals. His poem Veth (The Martyr) and Tarani Watan (Hymn to the Homeland) became emblematic of his fusion of nature and nationalism:

> "The bulbul sings to the flowers:  
> A garden is our land...

> Like walls of white marble,  
> The mountain peaks enclose  
> A sunny space of emerald green—  
> A garden is our land."

Mehjoor's progressive ethos aligned with the sub-continent's Progressive Writers' Movement (1936), advocating equality, anti-imperialism, and social justice. His poem Azaadi (Freedom), a scathing critique of post-independence disillusionment, and Gul-i-Lala (The Red Tulip), symbolizing revolutionary fervor, cemented his role as Kashmir's poetic conscience.

Political Engagement: Poetry as Protest

Amid Sheikh Abdullah's transformation of the Muslim Conference into the National Conference (1939), Mehjoor's verses became anthems of resistance. His iconic call—

> "Voloha baagh vano! Nau bahaaruk shan paida kar  
> (Oh Gardener, awaken! Herald the spring of renewal)"

resonated as a rallying cry against Dogra oppression. Despite his alignment with progressive ideals, Mehjoor avoided overt communist dogma, instead emphasizing communal harmony. His metaphor "Hindus are sugar, Muslims are milk" epitomized his vision of unity, applauding Sheikh Abdullah's inclusive politics.

Legacy: Immortalizing the Shair-e-Kashmir

Mehjoor authored 17 works, including Kalam-e-Mehjoor (poetry collections) and Tazkira-e-Shora-e-Kash-

mir (biographies of Kashmiri poets). Posthumously, his influence endured: Radio Kashmir broadcast his poems, Balraj Sahni portrayed him in a biopic, and the government reinterred him at Srinagar's Mazari Shora (1952) with state honors.

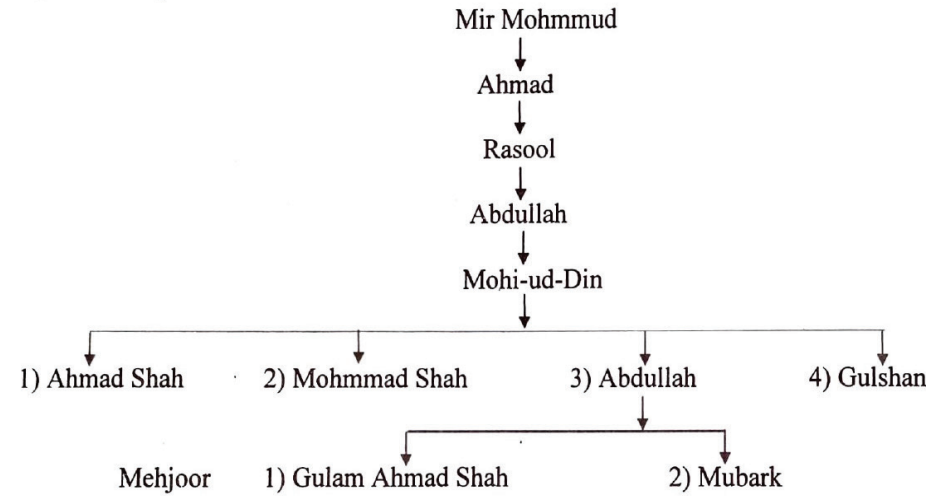
Critics, like Abdul Ahad Azad, lauded his lucid Kashmiri, free from Persian excess, while the Encyclopaedia of Indian Literature hailed him for forging a "new language of expression." His advocacy for women, as seen in Grees Kour (The Peasant's Daughter), and his universal themes of brotherhood and resilience ensure his relevance today.

Conclusion: The Eternal Gardener of Kashmir's Soul

Mehjoor's genius lay in transforming poetry into a mirror of Kashmir's soul—its beauty, anguish, and unyielding hope. As we navigate modern challenges, his call to "never forget our Shair-e-Kashmir" reminds us that art, rooted in empathy and courage, remains humanity's most potent weapon. In Mehjoor's verses, Kashmir finds not just its voice, but its enduring heartbeat.

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November Session and Exams: A Race Against Time



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When the structure of time is altered, the responsibility to adapt must be matched with support, not silence.

In recent years, our educational system has seen multiple reform efforts, but one of the most talked-about is the restoration of the October-November academic session by the current government under the leadership of Chief Minister Omar Abdullah. This session structure had existed for years before being altered by the previous LG-led administration, in order to implement "Uniform Academic Policy" which shifted it to March. Now, with the return of an elected government, the earlier session has been promptly reinstated.

While the move is intended to provide relief from harsh winters and better align with the national academic framework, its abrupt implementation has surfaced several challenges that demand immediate and thoughtful intervention.

This shift, although welcome in spirit, has brought both convenience and complication. The current academic year will now span barely 6 to 7 months. In such a short duration, completing the entire syllabus has become an overwhelming task for students and teachers alike especially in demanding streams like medical/JEE where even 10 to 11 months often fall short. Coaching centres, already packed with back-to-back batches, are struggling to compress months of content into mere weeks.

With school hours now running from 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM, and coaching centres starting their sessions post 3:00 PM until 7:00 PM, the day has become incredibly hectic for students. Coaching centres can't function during school hours,

and thus, the learning time outside formal schooling is significantly restricted. Students now shuttle between two learning spaces, barely getting time to rest or reflect, let alone revise. With classes starting late in the afternoon and stretching into the evening, one wonders how meaningful instruction can truly be delivered in such a crammed schedule.

The Way Forward for Students

To cope with this transition, students must now think smart and act smarter. It's no longer sufficient to rely solely on offline classes. A hybrid approach leveraging both online and offline resources can empower students to not just keep up with the syllabus but also secure adequate time for revision. Access to recorded lectures, digital notes, mock tests, and doubt-clearing sessions can greatly ease the pressure on young minds.

A Call for Government Schools to Modernise

The time has also come to revamp government schools.

It's unfortunate that despite having qualified staff, thousands of students prefer private schools. The reason is simple: outdated infrastructure, passive teaching methods, and lack of accountability.

If we truly want government institutions to thrive, they must embrace modern education systems. From smart classrooms and interactive labs to extracurricular development and life skills training, every element of the schooling experience needs a 360-degree upgrade. In line with competitive demands, subjective assessments must be supplemented with OMR-based testing to prepare students for national-level exams.

Responsibility of the Directorate of Education

The Directorate of Education must not wait for a crisis to take action. Teachers need to be trained and motivated to conduct extra classes both online and offline. Incentivising their involvement and recognising their contribution can breathe new life into the

teaching community. If we expect miracles from teachers, we must empower them with tools, training, and trust.

The Bigger Picture: Beyond Session Changes

But let's not stop at calendar reforms. Our education system today is a patient showing signs of chronic illness. We're churning out batches of degree holders replete with theoretical information but lacking in practical life skills. Graduates roam the streets with files and resumes, while the job market remains indifferent to their qualifications.

We must ask ourselves: What good is a degree that can't help a youth stand on their own feet? What use is education that fails to instill dignity through self-reliance?

It's concerning that many degree-holding graduates remain unemployed or underemployed, while those with practical skills often thrive economically. This isn't to undermine any profession, but rather to highlight a fundamental flaw in our education system. We continue to

focus heavily on theoretical knowledge while ignoring the real-world skills that today's job market demands. It's time our curriculum reflects the needs of the 21st century by integrating vocational training, digital literacy, entrepreneurship, communication skills, and financial awareness—so students are not just educated, but truly empowered to build their futures.

Time to Look Beyond Books

We are far behind the pace of the modern world. While the globe is experimenting with AI, robotics, green technologies, and futuristic careers, we are still caught up in rote learning. There's a dire need to introduce students to diverse fields—sports, media, cinema, IT, agriculture, environmental sciences, and business innovation.

If a child is gifted in sports, let that talent be nurtured alongside academics. If someone dreams of being an artist or an app developer, let them find mentors and platforms from school itself. Education must not produce passive job seekers but proactive job cre-

ators.

The Crisis of Morality

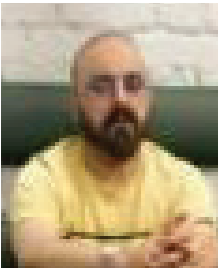
More than ever, education must go beyond textbooks and technology it must nurture character. We don't just need professionals; we need principled individuals. A nation's strength lies not only in its infrastructure, but in the integrity of its citizens. If our students emerge academically brilliant but morally disconnected, we risk building a future without a foundation.

Educational institutions should be more than examination factories they should be spaces where integrity is instilled, empathy is encouraged, and social responsibility is shaped. Values like honesty, respect, cultural pride, and compassion must not be sidelined they must be central to the curriculum that shapes our next generation.

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# Waqf in India: A Monumental Failure of Muslim Leadership and Institutional Responsibility



**SYED HIDAYAT BUKHARI**  
THE SOCIETAL LENS

Despite owning over 4 lakh hectares of land and nearly 9 lakh properties, the Waqf system in India remains one of the most tragically mismanaged public trusts in the country. Originally conceived as a charitable endowment system rooted in Islamic tradition to serve the poor, the orphaned, and the marginalized, Waqf today represents a colossal example of systemic neglect, corruption, and squandered potential. The result? A community that continues to languish in the lowest strata of India's developmental indicators, even as vast resources lie idle or are exploited by mafias, middlemen, and political cronies.

Waqf—derived from Arabic, meaning to 'stop' or 'contain' for a charitable cause—is a religious trust where land or property is donated in perpetuity for social, religious, or educational use. In India, Muslims historically donated land and property for the maintenance of mosques, dargahs, schools, orphanages, and burial grounds. Today, these endowments collectively form an empire—on paper. According to the Ministry of Minority Affairs and the Central Waqf Council, India has more than 8.7 lakh Waqf properties spread across 4 lakh hectares, equivalent to the combined landmass of Delhi, Mumbai, and Bengaluru. The estimated market value ranges from Rs 1.2 lakh crore to Rs 10 lakh crore, making it one of the largest non-state land holdings in the country.

And yet, what should have been a cornerstone of upliftment for India's 200-million-strong Muslim population has largely failed. Only one college—MSS Wafk Board College in Tamil Nadu—is directly run by a Waqf Board. There are no major Waqf-funded universities, hospitals, or large-scale employment initiatives. Many of the properties lie encroached, underuti-

lized, or mismanaged. This is not just a case of lost revenue; it is a story of generational loss.

The evidence of systemic failure is clear when juxtaposed against national development data. As of 2025, Muslims in India still have one of the lowest labor force participation rates (35.1%), and their unemployment rate rose from 2.4% in 2022-23 to 3.2% in 2023-24. Only 18% of working Muslims hold regular salaried positions. In education, Muslim literacy (79.5%) still lags the national average (80.9%), with female literacy especially low at ~53%. In government employment, their presence is abysmal—only 2.17% of jobs in Odisha, despite being 5% of the population there. Parliamentary representation is under 5% nationally.

This stark backwardness cannot be fully understood without addressing the failure of institutional Waqf management. The Karnataka Waqf Board scam (2012) revealed that nearly 27,000 acres of Waqf land worth Rs 2 lakh crore was misappropriated. Properties were leased for Rs 1-10 per acre annually, sometimes without documentation. Across India, mafias and political interests have colluded to siphon Waqf wealth. In many states, there is no digital inventory of properties, no audit trails, and no professional land management.

#### The Waqf Paradox - Rich in Assets, Poor in Outcomes

- Total Waqf Properties: 8.7 lakh+
- Land Area: 4 lakh hectares (15,783 sq. km)
- Estimated Value: Rs 1.2 to 10 lakh crore
- Education Assets Built: Only 1 college run directly by Waqf Board
- Healthcare Assets: 0 major hospitals

Despite massive potential, Waqf has not produced universities, hospitals, or job-training centers. Its income is either untracked or squandered. Most leases are outdated and undervalued, with little community return.

#### How Waqf Could Have Changed the Game If even 10% of Waqf land (40,000 hectares) were developed:

- 1,000 schools and 100 colleges could be built
- 200 hospitals and 500 clinics established

- Low-cost housing for 2 lakh families
- 1,000 skill centers and 200 incubators
- Women-focused hostels, SHGs, and vocational training hubs

The socio-economic upliftment of millions could be achieved within a decade, without government funding, through proper asset monetization.

#### Why Waqf Has Failed

1. **Corruption and Land Mafia Nexus**
  - o Example: Karnataka scam Rs 2 lakh crore
  - o Illegal leasing and encroachments
2. **Lack of Institutional Capacity**
  - o No professional estate managers, accountants, or lawyers
  - o Absence of GIS mapping, audit tools, and revenue tracking
3. **Political Interference**
  - o Waqf boards filled with political appointees, not domain experts
  - o Minimal accountability or tenure-based review
4. **Community Disengagement**
  - o Muslims unaware of local Waqf land
  - o No community councils or district audit groups

#### The Path Forward To reclaim Waqf as a community engine, India must:

- Create a National Waqf Asset Development Authority (NWADA) with executive powers
- Digitize and geotag 100% of properties, publish lease and encroachment data
- Bring in professional asset managers, chartered accountants, and urban planners
- Launch Waqf Investment Zones to fund healthcare, education, housing
- Build Community Vigilance Committees for ground-level monitoring
- What Could Have Been: If Waqf Had Been Properly Utilized

Had the Waqf properties in India been systematically developed and leveraged even at a modest scale—say 10% of the total 4 lakh hectares—the impact on the Muslim community would have been nothing short of transformative. With professional governance, transparent monetization, and strategic planning, the upliftment of education, healthcare, employment, housing, and women's empowerment could

have reached millions. Below is a detailed, paragraph-style reflection on what the socio-economic profile of Indian Muslims could have looked like by 2025 if Waqf had been used as originally intended.

In education, the story of change could have been revolutionary. Today, the literacy rate among Muslims stands at 79.5%, just below the national average. However, with a thousand Waqf-funded schools, a hundred modern colleges, and several universities modeled after AMU or Jamia, the community could have easily crossed the 90% literacy mark. Female literacy, stuck around 53%, could have climbed to 75-80% with better access, scholarships, and hostels for girls. Over 10 million additional students could have benefited annually from quality education, creating a ripple effect across generations.

In employment, Muslim representation in salaried jobs is just 18%, and unemployment is rising. But Waqf lands could have housed more than a thousand vocational training centers, ITIs, and tech incubators, skilling at least 1-2 million youth. This would have elevated Muslim participation in the workforce to 35-40%, drastically reducing joblessness, especially among the youth. This alone could have brought about a major shift in income stability and household security.

Healthcare, a vital yet neglected aspect, could have received a tremendous boost. With over 200 hospitals and 500 clinics funded through Waqf revenues, Muslims—especially in underserved districts—could have received accessible, affordable, and culturally sensitive care. Instead of serving less than a million today, the system could have served 20 million annually. Critical indicators such as infant and maternal mortality would have improved significantly, matching or exceeding national averages.

Housing is another area where Waqf had unmatched potential. With over 4 lakh hectares of land, even allocating a fraction for low-cost housing could have led to the construction of 2-3 million housing units. Slum dwellings, which today house over 32% of urban Muslims, could have been replaced by structured communi-

ties with dignity, sanitation, and legal tenure. This would not only uplift families but also create jobs in construction and allied sectors.

Women empowerment, often sidelined in public policy, could have seen tangible institutional support. With thousands of Waqf-hosted women's hostels, vocational centers, and microfinance hubs, the female workforce participation could have jumped from 11% to as high as 30%. Access to credit, education, and employment would have drastically reduced dependency and increased household prosperity.

From an economic perspective, Waqf properties are grossly under-leveraged, generating less than Rs 500 crore annually. With even moderate monetization strategies, this figure could have easily touched Rs 8,000 to Rs 10,000 crore per year. This recurring revenue could then be recycled back into community initiatives—education scholarships, health subsidies, legal aid, and job creation.

Representation, too, could have seen an upswing. With better education, economic empowerment, and community infrastructure, Muslim participation in governance, public administration, and policymaking would naturally increase—from the current 2-4% in government jobs to a much healthier 8-10%.

In short, a properly managed Waqf system could have changed the fate of millions. It could have pulled 20-30 million people out of poverty, created millions of jobs, and brought equity to education, health, and representation. It's a future that was very much within reach—and one that still can be, if the will to act emerges.

To better illustrate the missed opportunity, let us consider the potential transformation of the Muslim community in India if even 10% of Waqf land had been systematically utilized since the early 2000s. In terms of education, the literacy rate could have surged from 79.5% to over 90%, while female literacy might have improved from 53% to as high as 75-80%. College enrollment rates, currently hovering around 10%, could have easily climbed to 25-30% with access to more institutions.

In employment, regular salaried job participation among Mus-

lims—currently just 18%—could have nearly doubled to 35-40% due to new training centers, industrial zones, and educational support. Unemployment, which has risen to 3.2%, could have fallen below 2% with focused job creation. The development of over a thousand vocational centers and business incubators could have added 1.5-2 million jobs to the community.

In healthcare, where there are currently no major Waqf-funded hospitals, the construction of 200 hospitals and 500 clinics could have provided medical care to over 20 million people annually. This would drastically improve key indicators such as infant mortality, reducing it from 36 per 1,000 to below 20 per 1,000.

On the housing front, with over 32% of urban Muslims living in slums, Waqf-funded housing colonies could have decreased this number to below 10%. Around 2-3 million families could have benefited from dignified, affordable homes developed on unused Waqf lands.

For women, Waqf development could have fostered empowerment through hostels, vocational centers, and microfinance institutions. This would increase female workforce participation from 11% to nearly 30%, offering security, mobility, and independence to millions.

Economically, Waqf's annual revenue—currently under Rs 500 crore—could have grown to Rs 8,000-10,000 crore. This could be reinvested into scholarships, social support, legal aid, and new infrastructure. Representation in government jobs would likely improve from the current 2-4% to 8-10%, and community-led development projects could expand from a handful to over 500 nationwide.

These projections underscore the magnitude of the opportunity lost. With focused policy, professional management, and community mobilization, this future is still achievable.

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## Biodiversity save ho conservation of wildlife



**VIJAY GARG**

Wildlife conservation is essential not just for the quality of human life but also for the survival of human life. The theme is this time of World Wildlife Day to be celebrated on March 3 every year, 'Wildlife Conservation Finance: Investing in People and Planet.' In fact it means managing economic resources to conserve wildlife and their natural habitats to protect not only biodiversity but also benefit society and whole earth. This theme has very deep meanings. If economic investments were not made on wildlife and wildlife to protect their ecosystem, a very large population of the world will also be deprived of growth. The tribal community is benefited from the investment on

wildlife conservation itself, the continuous use of eco tourism, alternative employment and natural resources makes the living standard of the local people better. While it is also important to know that Wildlife Conservation Day is not celebrated for the development of tribal communities but the destruction of wildlife constantly behind it being celebrated. The aim of celebrating World Wildlife Day on March 3 every year is to boost the awareness of people towards wildlife and vegetation and create respect for wildlife in the minds of people. Well apart from the different theme of every year, the local theme that wildlife day is to be celebrated is aimed at building awareness about wildlife and vegetation. Obviously these awareness boosts also need financial resources on the by scale. So on the day of World Wildlife Conservation Day, all the financial organizations, various governments, civil society and corporate world together discuss the mobilization of these resources. This year is especially the perfect theme that when, how and where to arrange the broad scale finance that

needs to save the wildlife of the world. When it comes to investment on wildlife conservation it is made clear that it means making local communities better than resources. If there is an investment on wildlife conservation, the balance of ecology in the earth can be expected by the continuous destruction of Varna wildlife, it is also decided to belittle climate change and lead to natural disasters. So the investment made to save wildlife is called investment made to save earth. If invested for wildlife conservation, the ecological balance will also be strong, there will be a stop in climate change, there will be a decrease in natural calamities and ecological services such as clean water, air, etc., which is essential not just to keep human life healthy but also to preserve it. Wildlife is the important part of the ecosystem. It keeps the food chain balanced and is helpful in smooth running of natural cycles such as carbon and nitrogen cycles. So the extinction of any organism species has an effect as a buffer danger for the lives of humans. Because any organism species from nature

when fading, that level of imbalance is created and this affects the ecosystem all over. Wildlife conservation is also helpful in preventing climate change as the living organisms living in forests control animal and root-plant climate change in their own way. For example, elephants disperse seeds in forests, causing not only the growth of forests to be their denaturation. Forests absorb carbondioxide and absorb carbondioxide lowers the risk of global warming. Conservation of wildlife protects water sources. Similarly, wildlife conservation boosts biodiversity; because wildlife conservation means conservation of biodiversity. Every organism has its own role in saving the earth. If an organism fades the role of its part does not pick up any other and thus cause loss of biodiversity. For example, if hunter-gatherers like lion and tiger will be reduced in the forest, the number of herbivores like deer and wild boar will be saved and they will wipe out the forests.

**Vijay Garg Retired Principal  
Educational Columnist Street  
kour Chand MHR Malout  
Punjab**

## As the tenth wedding anniversary begins



**Dr. Satyawan Saurabh**

"The story of the two of us... has turned out to be more beautiful than time. Happy 10th anniversary!"

"Wherever you are, that's my home. And this home is now 10 years old."

As the tenth wedding anniversary begins....  
Some old photos made me smile again.  
That first smile, that slight blush,

As if the book of time had turned again.  
Go together year after year,  
Sometimes in the sun, sometimes in the shade,

There were some silences, some laughter,  
Sometimes getting angry, sometimes coaxing—there were all colors in this game of relationships.

Remember the first fight?  
Or the first time you made tea?  
The aroma of the tea is still the same.  
Makes every morning special.  
We have achieved a lot during these years.  
Some lost, some saved, some secured,  
But the most precious thing was this companionship—

Which brought us closer to each other at every turn.

On the tenth anniversary of marriage,  
I just want to say "thank you" to you –  
You held my hand in every storm,  
And looked into my eyes with every smile.  
Come, let's start this new decade.  
Make a promise again.  
that every next year,  
May it be spent in love, spent together, and spent just as beautifully.

## The Sun is Red

The sun is red,  
Like her  
The ocean is streaming  
Over the gentle cascade,  
That's lively rib boned.  
The eyes are blue,  
And sing the rhyme

In the desert  
In the bloom,  
And into a heart.  
The flower is awakening,  
From her lonely sleep  
Its smiling in life  
A fresh wind comes,  
And catches the bud.

**Sidharth P K  
(Writer/ Teacher/ Poet)**



# Shrine Board, THDCIL & GSI collaborate for enhanced Pilgrim safety on Vaishno Devi track

■ HT News Network

Katra, April 9: The Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board (SMVDSB) has signed a tripartite Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Tehri Hydro Development Corporation Limited India Limited (THDCIL) and the Geological Survey of India (GSI) to enhance pilgrim safety and security during the pilgrimage to the revered Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine. This decision was made during a recent Meeting of the Board held under the Chairmanship of Shri Manoj Sinha, Hon'ble Lt. Governor, JK-UT with the objective to ensure the long-term safety and resilience of the yatra route through advanced geotechnical and geophysical investigations, coupled with the design of modern slope stabilization measures.

The MoU was signed by Alok Kumar Maurya, Additional CEO, SMVDSB; Dr. Niraj Agrawal, GM, Design (Civil-II), THDCIL and Sanjiv Kumar, Deputy Director General, GSI (NR) in the presence of Anshul Garg, Chief Executive Officer, SMVDSB along with senior officers from Shrine Board, THDCIL and GSI.

The MoU outlines the scope of work, roles and responsibilities of SMVDSB, THDCIL and GSI by establishing committees to conduct geological investigations and geotechnical surveys to identify potential risks on the pilgrimage track. The data collected will be used further to develop and implement effective



measures to mitigate the risks associated with landslides and rockfalls. The partnership will also facilitate the sharing of expertise and resources among the three organizations.

The agreement also involves conducting an extensive LIDAR survey to identify and delineate areas of slope instability particularly along the Adhkuwari to Bhawan yatra

route for treatment measures with execution of work undertaken under the close supervision of the Geological Survey of India (GSI).

Notably, the Shrine Board has been working with THDCIL since 2012 to mitigate the risks associated with falling stones and landslides, which posed a threat to pilgrim safety. THDCIL have so far treated and stabilized 28 sites, which have been identified as most vulnerable landslide and stone falling areas on the yatra track. Effective measures are implemented in vulnerable zones including installation of rockfall barriers, wire mesh, concrete work, drilling, grouting and anchoring towards which an expenditure in excess of Rs.40

Cr has been incurred by the Board till date.

The Shrine Board under the guidance and directions of the Hon'ble Chairman, SMVDSB has been working tirelessly to improve the pilgrimage experience and this collaboration is a significant milestone in this endeavor. With the expertise and resources of THDCIL and GSI, the Shrine Board is poised to take a major leap forward in ensuring the safety and security of pilgrims, while promoting sustainable pilgrimage and protecting the shrine's ecosystem. Additionally, the partnership will not only enhance the safety and security of pilgrims but also contribute to the overall development of the region.

## J&K Govt sponsored Startups shine at Startup Mahakumbh 2025; wins Rs 25 Lakh cash award

■ HT News Network

JAMMU, APRIL 09: In a significant development, two startups M/s Genetico Private Limited and M/s GR8 Private Limited from J&K have emerged victorious at the prestigious Startup Mahakumbh 2025, clinching top honors in the Startup MahaRathi Challenge.

M/s Genetico Private Limited received an award of Rs. 20 lakh under the HealthTech and BioTech sector, while M/s GR8 Sports Private Limited won Rs. 5 lakh under the Gaming and Sports sector, emerging as top performers among startups from across India in their respective categories. Pertinently, the Startup MahaRathi challenge is a flagship initiative of the department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) to organise competition among promising recognised early and growth stage startups



across 10 high impact sectors wherein 2400 startups participated from across the country. The awards were given on the eve of concluding ceremony of Startup Mahakumbh organised by the DPIIT at Bharat Mandapan, New Delhi from 3rd April to 5th April, 2025.

With a funding pool of over Rs. 70 crore, the challenge not only offered grant support but also provided startups with national recognition, global exposure, structured mentor-

ship, incubation opportunities and access to leading investor networks. Five startups from Jammu and Kashmir participated in the Startup Mahakumbh 2025, namely GR8 Sports Private Limited (Gaming & Sports), CLMRAT Sports, AL-Hamdaan Crafts, Studio Agama, BISA Innovation Private Limited. These startups were led by Irtif Mehraj Lone, In-charge Centre for Innovation, Incubation and Business Modeling (CIIBM), JKEDI and Zahid Ali Dar, Project

Manager, JKEDI.

The J&K Industries and Commerce Department has played a pivotal role in laying a strong foundation for the startup ecosystem in the Union Territory. The recognition of these two promising startups from Jammu and Kashmir demonstrates a growing startup ecosystem in the UT. The department has not only formulated a vibrant J&K Startup Policy-2024, but has also taken necessary steps for ensuring its speedy implementation through the designated Nodal agency, viz., the Jammu and Kashmir Entrepreneurship Development Institute (JKEDI). Sharing his thoughts on the achievement, Arjun Gupta, Founder of Genetico Private Limited, said, "It is wonderful that our years of hard work and commitment are being recognized by the government. There is a highly motivated and capable team behind Genetico. The award is not only for the founders.

### اطلاع عام

یہ اطلاع دی جاتی ہے کہ میری بیٹی منظر منظور کا آدھار کارڈ کچھ مجبور پولی کی وجہ سے تاخیر کا شکار ہو گیا تھا۔ اب میں اس کا آدھار کارڈ بنوا رہا ہوں۔ اگر کسی کو اس سلسلے میں کوئی اعتراض یا سوال ہو تو وہ براہ راست مجھے پانچ دن کے اندر اندر رابطہ کریں

المستہتر

نام: منظور احمد لونرہانشی: پشوری، مچل

رابطہ نمبر: 9622431357

تاریخ: 09/04/2025

### ازعدالت ایگزیکٹو مجسٹریٹ درج اول ویلگام

درخواست ٹہورا رآمد قریبی ولد عبدالعزیز بیٹا ساکن مونیو ویلگام الغرض تاریخ پیدائش بابت 25/09/2009

اشتہار بمراد آگاہی ہر خاص و عام

مندرجہ عنوان الصبر میں سائل نے عدالت میں ایک درخواست قبول بیان ملتی بغرض اندراج تاریخ پیدائش سرٹیفکیٹ مطابق رکھا 25/09/2009 مومن احمد قریبی ولد ٹہورا رآمد قریبی ساکن ویلگام پیش کی ہے لہذا ہر خاص و عام بذکرہ اشتہار مطلع کیا جاتا ہے کہ نسبت اندراج تاریخ پیدائش مذکورہ اگر کسی کو بھی غدر یا اعتراض ہو تو وہ سات دن کے اندر اندر دفتر عدالت میں پیش کریں مبعاد ختم ہونے کے بعد کوئی بھی اعتراض قابل قبول نہیں ہوگا

ایگزیکٹو مجسٹریٹ درج اول ویلگام

### اطلاع عام

بجلی کنکشن میں نام کی تبدیلی زیرکنزیو ممر آئی ڈی نمبر 0214010022456 جو بی بی میر سے باپ کے نام پر آئی تھی بنام مرحوم محمد امین وانی ولد عبدالعزیز وانی ساکن بستی پورہ ہندواڑہ اب اس کو سمجھا ہے نام پر درج کرنا مطلوب ہے عرفان احمد وانی ولد مرحوم محمد امین وانی ساکن بستی پورہ ہندواڑہ کے نام پر درج کرنا مطلوب ہے اس ضمن میں اگر کسی بھی شخص یا شخص کو کوئی غدر یا اعتراض ہو تو وہ سات دن کے اندر اندر گورنمنٹ بجلی ڈپارٹمنٹ آفس چمٹی پورہ ہندواڑہ میں پیش کریں مبعاد ختم ہونے کے بعد کوئی بھی اعتراض قابل قبول نہیں ہوگا

المستہتر عرفان احمد وانی

ولد مرحوم محمد امین وانی

ساکن بھنی پورہ ہندواڑہ ڈسٹرکٹ کپواڈہ

GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU & KASHMIR

OFFICE OF THE TEHSILDAR KREERI

(Executive Magistrate 1st Class)

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

PUBLIC NOTICE

The Registrar Births and Deaths (Block Development Officer WAGOORA) / chokedar has submitted case file pertaining to Birth of MUZAMIL NAZIR S/O NAZIR AHMAD SHAH R/O KAKOTHAL Tehsil KREERI Distt. Baramulla having verified the date of Birth as 20/04/2019 and event has been shown to be occurred at home for issuance of delay order .In this connection . if anyone have any objection to the issuance of delay order of Birth certificate shall present his/her claim this office within 07 days, after that no objection shall be entertaine

Executive Magistrate  
1st Class KREERI

### PUBLIC NOTICE

I Bilkees Laway D/O Gh. Nabi Laway R/O Chawalgam kulgam, UT of Jammu and Kashmir have applied for correction of my name as Bilkees Laway instead of Bilquees Laway ,my actual name is Bilkees Laway but stands recorded as Bilquees Laway in 12th Class Certificates Marks and qualification . Now I am going to apply for Correction of the same. Objection if any may Conveyed to the concerned authorities within seven days from the date of publication of the notice.



Name:- Bilkees Laway  
D/O Gh Nabi Laway  
R/O Chawalgam kulgam

### PUBLIC NOTICE

It is being notified that my name in my Aadhar Card having Aadhar card number this 880778217731 has been wrongly mentioned as Peer Raafiq Mushtaq my actual name as per school record is Raafiq Mushtaq Shah DOB 05/03/2015 C/o Mushtaq Ahmad Shah Address : HARDUTOORU, achabal anantanag , j&k 192201

### PUBLIC NOTICE

Name Correction on Driving licence.

Name on my driving licence has been wrongly recorded as ZESHAN JAFFAR RISHI, bearing DL No-JK-0120050055060. Now I intend to Correct my name in the said DL which is ZEEHSAN JAFFER RISHI S/o MOHD JAFFER RISHI. Anybody having any objection in this regard may file his/her objection with ARTO office BARAMULLA/ SRINAGAR within Seven. days of the publication of this notice. After the said time period no objection will be entertained by any means.

Name:.....ZEEHSAN JAFFER RISHI

S/O MOHD JAFFER RISHI

R/O WATERGAM WAGOORA DISTT BARAMULLA

GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU & KASHMIR

OFFICE OF THE TEHSILDAR KREERI

(Executive Magistrate 1st Class)

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

PUBLIC NOTICE

The Registrar Births and Deaths (Block Development Officer WAGOORA) / chokedar has submitted case file pertaining to Birth of SHAHNAZA FAROOQ D/O FAROOQ AHMAD SHAH R/O KAKOTHAL Tehsil KREERI Distt. Baramulla having verified the date of Birth as 21/09/2009 and event has been shown to be occurred at Home for issuance of delay order .In this connection . if anyone have any objection to the issuance of delay order of Birth certificate shall present his/her claim this office within 07 days, after that no objection shall be entertaine

Executive Magistrate  
1st Class KREERI

GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU & KASHMIR

OFFICE OF THE TEHSILDAR KREERI

(Executive Magistrate 1st Class)

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

PUBLIC NOTICE

The Registrar Births and Deaths (Block Development Officer WAGOORA) / chokedar has submitted case file pertaining to Birth of SYED MOHAMMAD AFAAN BUKHARI S/O SYED ZAHOOOR HUSSAIN BUKHARI R/O KREERI Distt. Baramulla having verified the date of Birth as 28/09/2017 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 entertaine

Executive Magistrate  
1st Class KREERI

GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU & KASHMIR

OFFICE OF THE TEHSILDAR KREERI

(Executive Magistrate 1st Class)

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

PUBLIC NOTICE

The Registrar Births and Deaths (Block Development Officer WAGOORA) / chokedar has submitted case file pertaining to Birth of SOBIYA GUL D/O GHULAM MOHAMMAD PARRAY R/O HAIL JAGIR Tehsil KREERI Distt. Baramulla having verified the date of Birth as 11/04/2011 and event has been shown to be occurred at HOME for issuance of delay order .In this connection . if anyone have any objection to the issuance of delay order of Birth certificate shall present his/her claim this office within 07 days, after that no objection shall be entertaine

Executive Magistrate  
1st Class KREERI

GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU & KASHMIR

OFFICE OF THE TEHSILDAR KREERI

(Executive Magistrate 1st Class)

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

PUBLIC NOTICE

The Registrar Births and Deaths (Block Development Officer WAGOORA) / chokedar has submitted case file pertaining to Birth of MOHAMMAD SAJID MALLA S/O MOHAMMAD SALEEM MALLA R/O WAGOORA Tehsil WAGOORA Distt. Baramulla having verified the date of Birth as 25/08/2019 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 entertaine

Executive Magistrate  
1st Class KREERI

## Kishtwar: Single Window Committee discusses quarry land request by CVPPL

■ HT News Network

KISHTWAR, APRIL 09: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Rajesh Kumar Shavan today chaired the Single Window Committee Meeting to discuss the request made by the CVPPL, represented by the General Manager (GM) of the Pakal Dul Hydroelectric (HE) Project. The request pertains to obtaining Single Window

Clearance for a proposed quarry land located on the right bank of the Marusadar River, downstream of the Coffor Dam of the Pakal Dul HE Project, in order to secure a Quarry License. During the meeting, the DC directed all concerned members of the Single Window Committee to thoroughly review the contents of the communica-

tion and conduct a joint inspection of the proposed site. The committee has been given a one-week deadline to submit their comments/ the No Objection Certificates (NOC) or otherwise for further process by the DC. The meeting was attended by DFO Vishal Choudhary; CAO Amjad Hussain Malik; CHO Sajid Mustafa, ExEn

PWD Ravinder Verma, besides other concerned officers and staff. The committee has been given a one-week deadline to submit their comments/ the No Objection Certificates (NOC) or otherwise for further process by the DC. The meeting was attended by DFO Vishal Choudhary; CAO Amjad Hussain Malik; CHO Sajid Mustafa, ExEn

## Office of the District Collector Kulgam

Subject: Land acquisition for construction of construction of PethDevsar Lift Irrigation Scheme in village Qasba Devsar Tehsil Devsar & District Kulgam regarding issuance of declaration under section 19 of the Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land acquisition, Rehabilitation & Resettlement Act 2013.

Notification,  
Kulgam, the 8th April, 2025.

Whereas it appears to the appropriate Government that a total of 01 Kanai 19 Marlas of land in village Qasba Devsar Tehsil Devsar District Kulgam is required for public purpose namely, construction of PethDevsar Lift Irrigation Scheme. Whereas, on the basis of indent placed by requiring body vide No. 13565-67 dated 16/01/2024, after completing the SIA Study and consideration of report by the appropriate Government, the collector land acquisition issued a preliminary notification for the said land vide No. DCK/NLA/ACR/2024/09 of 2024, dated 21/10/2024 for calling objections from the interested persons; and Whereas, no objection was received within stipulated time and the government is satisfied after considering the report made by the collector, land particulars which are given below is required for public purposes;

S.no	Khasra No, survey No	Type of the title pvt/ Govt /Common	Type of Land Rural Urban	Area Under Acquisition		Trees		Structures	
				K	M	Variety	Number	Type area	Plinth
1	688min	Pvt Land	Rural	1	12	-	-	0	0
2	783	Pvt Land	Rural	0	7	APPLE	22	0	0
						PEAR	16	0	0
						QUINCE	03	0	0
						Charrey	02	0	0
						Walnut	01	0	0
						Appricot	01	0	0

Now, therefore declare under provision of section 19 of the right to fair compensation and transparency in land acquisition Rehabilitation and resettlement act 2013 the said land is required for public propose i.e construction of peth devsar lift irrigation scheme .

DIPK-225/25  
Date: Apr 9 2025

(District Collector),  
KULGAM.





# Block Diwas held at Noorkha Block in Baramulla

## People raise key developmental issues; DC Baramulla issues on-spot directions

■ **HT News Network**

BARAMULLA, APRIL 09: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Baramulla, Minga Sherpa Wednesday presided over a Block Diwas at Noorkha Block of Boniyar Tehsil, drawing significant public participation. General public on the occasion flagged-off various developmental concerns and demands with the district administration. Key issues raised included road connectivity, with demands for macadamization of inner link roads like Chala to Noorkha. Locals also called for the promotion of Vijitop Gagward as a tourist destination and request-

ed construction of tourism infrastructure such as huts. The upgradation of the High School at Bimyar to a Higher Secondary School was strongly advocated to improve access to higher secondary education. Concerns were also raised regarding drinking water shortages in certain habitations. Locals demanded swift completion of PHE schemes under Jal Jeevan Mission, and also requested the establishment of ration depots in underserved areas. Healthcare demands included the deployment of a veterinary doctor at Phelipora, as well as an ambulance, lab technician and night staff at PHC Bimyar. Residents further demanded



linking of the irrigation pump at Naganari with Ijjara and the development of a local playground. Responding to the issues, DC issued several on-spot directions to the concerned departments. The Executive Engineer PHE was directed to expedite work on ongoing schemes and ensure that all unconnected habitations are covered in a time-bound manner. The officers from FCS&CA, were instructed to examine the feasibility and take necessary steps for establishing additional ration stores in the region to meet public needs. The concerned Zonal Education Officer was asked to process the proposal for upgradation of

the High School at Bimyar to Higher Secondary level and submit it for consideration at the appropriate level. Regarding road development, the DC informed that PMGSY Phase 4 is underway, with DPRs submitted and around 40 roads in Sub Division Uri likely to be approved soon. He directed concerned engineers to prioritize macadamization of roads under (CND) scheme, especially in areas highlighted during the Block Diwas. DC also stated that the Hilan to Hakhpatri road would be developed to enhance regional tourism potential. On healthcare, he assured that an ambulance will be provided to PHC Bimyar under CSR funding.

## DC Kulgam chairs DRSC meet, calls for strict action against traffic violators

■ **Farooq Rather**

KULGAM, APRIL 09: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Kulgam, Athar Aamir Khan today chaired a meeting of the District Road Safety Committee (DRSC) to review the implementation of the Road Safety Action Plan and deliberate on various measures to improve road safety across the district. The meeting featured detailed discussions on the Road Safety Act, traffic calming measures, road signage and the rectification of accident-prone spots. DC reviewed the progress on tasks assigned to various departments in previous meetings and stressed the importance of inter-departmental coordination to strengthen the road safety framework. Officers briefed the chair



on steps taken to rectify black spots, erect crash barriers, and install road signage at critical points. Active participation from committee members led to meaningful discussions and formulation of strategic measures aimed at enhancing road safety throughout the district. The DC directed the concerned departments to take strict action against traffic rule violators and emphasized the need for curbing violations effectively. He instructed ARTO to prepare a comprehensive road

safety awareness calendar. All departments were directed to ensure timely updates on the iRAD (Integrated Road Accident Database) portal. The DC also instructed the R&B and PMGSY departments to conduct road safety audits, identify black spots and blind spots, and project them for rectification to reduce accident risks. Furthermore, the MVD and other stakeholders were directed to carry out extensive awareness campaigns across the district.

## ICE campaign against Drug Abuse gains momentum in Ganderbal

■ **HT News Network**

GANDERBAL, APRIL 09: As part of its ongoing efforts to combat drug abuse, the District Administration Ganderbal today organized a series of awareness programs under the Nasha Mukti Abhiyan (Nasha & Khatrona) campaign, aiming to curb the menace of substance abuse and educate the youth and general public about its harmful impacts.

Awareness camps were held across multiple educational institutions in the district including Government Degree College Ganderbal, BHSS Gund, GHSS Kangan, BHSS Wakura, BHSS Manigam, BHSS Safapora and BHSS Kurhama.

The events witnessed active participation from various departments



including Health, Police, Education, Social Welfare and Rural Development.

The primary focus of these camps was to sensitize students, parents, and the wider community on the physical, psychological and social repercussions of drug abuse.

The sessions emphasized early intervention, strong community support systems and the availability of rehabilitation services.

At Government Degree College Ganderbal, Additional Deputy Commis-

sioner, Syed Fahim Bihaqi graced the occasion as the chief guest. The event saw enthusiastic participation from college staff, students, and community members.

Speaking on the occasion, the ADC highlighted the need for collective responsibility and community engagement in eradicating drug abuse. He underscored the importance of education, family support, and active community involvement in both prevention and rehabilitation efforts.

## DLC approves 1471 cases under HADP in Ganderbal

■ **HT News Network**

GANDERBAL, APRIL 09: District Development Commissioner (DDC) Ganderbal, Jatin Kishore today chaired a meeting of the District Level Committee (DLC) here in the V.C. Room of the DC office to discuss and approve cases received under Holistic Agriculture Development Plan (HADP).

The committee approved 1471 cases of various sectors, including agriculture, horticulture, animal husbandry, and allied fields. Among these, 134 cases have been linked with credit.

DDC emphasized that the HADP is a major step towards creating a sustainable and profitable agricultural ecosystem and urged all officers to intensify efforts to reach out to farmers, ensuring maximum participation in HADP initiatives and utilizing available resources to their full potential.

He also reviewed the registration of farmers on Daksh Kisan Portal, KKG and Kisan Sathi portal, and impressed officers to augment registration of farmers.

Furthermore, streamlining Credit Linkage schemes implementation was also emphasized so that a commitment to optimizing its advantages for sustainable agricultural growth is achieved.

The meeting was attended by Chief Planning Officer, GM, DIC; Assistant Commissioner Revenue, Chief Agriculture Officer, District Sheep Husbandry Officer, Assistant Director Fisheries and other committee members.

## Block Diwas held at Ajas to address public grievances, review dev needs

DC assures timely redressal of public grievances

■ **HT News Network**



BANDIPORA, APRIL 09: The District Administration Bandipora on Wednesday conducted mega Block Diwas at Ajas Bandipora to strengthen grassroots governance. The programme presided over by Deputy Commissioner (DC) Bandipora, Manzoor Ahmad Qadri witnessed participation of District Development Council Member Hajin B, Ghulam Mustafa Khan; civil society representatives, youth delegates and large public gathering. During the programme, DC took firsthand appraisal of public grievances and developmental demands. Delegations from Go Green Ajas, Civil Society, Tehsil Welfare Committee Ajas, Ex-BDC Chairman Nazir Ahmad, Youth Representatives, and representatives from ST community highlighted various issues including macadamization of inner links, construction of tehsil office, availability of staff in schools, approach road to NTPHC, upgradation of school infrastructure, construction of playground and public library, effective waste management, besides other issues of public importance. Speaking on the occasion, DDC Member Hajin B emphasized the need for development of sports infrastructure to engage youth positively and keep them away from drugs and substance abuse. He also highlighted the need for ground-level implementation of the Forest Rights Act besides raising various issues of public importance. Responding to public issues, the DC assured that all genuine demands will be addressed in a time-bound manner.

Regarding waste management, DC directed Tehsildar Ajas to identify land for construction of Material Recovery Facility (MRF), besides also instructed BDO Hajin to conduct awareness programmes to generate awareness regarding proper waste segregation and disposal. Qadri also instructed tehsildar to identify land for construction of the playground and Public library.

## Block Diwas held at Zainapora, Shopian

### DC urges people to avail benefits of PM Surya Ghar scheme

■ **HT News Network**

SHOPIAN, APRIL 09: In order to lend patient hearing to public concerns, the Deputy Commissioner (DC) Shopian, Shishir Gupta today presided over a Block Diwas event at Zainapora, Shopian. On the occasion, public delegations from Zainapora, Babapora, Sofipora, Safnagri, Aglar Chirat and other individuals raised various issues of public importance pertaining to development of irrigation network in the area, pendency of applications in horticulture and agriculture departments for availing farm machinery, provision of better water and



power supplies. Public also demanded development of playgrounds, educational institutions at Sofipora, desiltation of canals, animal husbandry infrastructure development, beautification of Nallah Tongri, construction of public toilets, installation of solar lights and

transport yard in Zainapora, staff for CHC and other health centres, macadamization of Zainapora and Bijbehara road, Aglar to Shopian road and other interior roads in the sub-division besides rejuvenation of springs, waste disposal services and various other welfare and development issues.

## IUST Organized seminar on Unlocking Opportunities in the Food and Allied

■ **HT News Network**

Awantipora, April 9: The Department of Food Technology, Islamic University of Science and Technology (IUST) in collaboration with Agrivision4U, organized a seminar exploring the potential of the food and allied sectors. The seminar was attended by scholars, students, faculty and industry experts who discussed the latest trends, challenges, and opportunities in the field. Mr. Raju Prajapati, Founder and CEO of Agri Vision4U highlighted the importance of innovation and entrepreneurship in driving growth and development, and emphasized the need for capacity-building programs to prepare students for the industry.

The seminar aimed to raise career awareness among students, providing them with a comprehensive understanding of industry trends and potential career paths. Dr. Thameed Aijaz, Head of the Department of Food Technology, highlighted career prospects in the sector and the importance of collaboration with industry partners.

The seminar highlighted the importance of collaboration between academia and industry in driving growth and development in the food and allied sectors. Students got an opportunity to interact with industry experts and learn about the latest trends and challenges in the field. By fostering collaboration and innovation, the food and allied sectors.

# CUKashmir holds events in the run up to the birth anniversary of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar

■ **HT News Network**

Ganderbal, Apr 9: In the run up to the 135th birth anniversary of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, offices of OBC Cell, SC, ST PWD Cell, Department of Students welfare (DSW) and the NSS Unit of the Central University of Kashmir (CUKashmir) jointly organised five-events. In his message, Vice-Chancellor, Prof. A. Ravinder Nath said, "Through these events—be it the screening of Babasaheb's biopic, spirited student debates, or symbolic Padyatras—we not only honour Dr. Ambedkar's legacy, but also spark essential conversations around equity, dignity, and justice. Education must remain a tool to dismantle barriers and build a more inclusive society." He lauded the collective efforts of faculty and students in translating Dr. Ambedkar's vision into actionable change.

Dean, Academic Affairs, Prof. Shahid Rasool, noted that these events could highlight Dr. B R Ambedkar's enduring



impact on social justice and inclusivity, fostering dialogue and action amongst students and faculty.

Inaugural event on 7th April featured a screening of the biographical film "Babasaheb Ambedkar" across university's departments, followed by interactive discussions on the visionary's life

and his advocacy of inclusive policies in national development.

On 8th April, three events were organised: elocation competition centred on the theme "Is Ambedkar's dream of annihilating caste still distant?" and an essay writing competition "Enduring Legacy of Dr. B R Ambedkar's Fight for Social

Justice". In line with guidelines from the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, a Padyatra was organised by NSS Coordinator Dr. Shabir Ahmad, in which students and volunteers walked from Tulmulla campus to Kheer Bhawani Temple, symbolising unity and reflection on Dr. B. R. Ambedkar's ideals.

Dr. John K. Babu, OBC Cell Liaison Officer remarked "the enthusiastic participation of CU Kashmir's diverse student community underscores the relevance of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar's ideas today. He said the varsity is organising an online webinar on "Dr. B. R. Ambedkar's ideology on inclusive society for national development" on 14th of April.

The organising team included DSW Director, Dr. Irfan Alam, and SC ST PWD Liaison Officer Dr. Altaf Hussain. Faculty members Dr. Noorakarju, Dr. Hima Bindu, Dr. Ahmad Mohamad Raza, Dr. Harpal Singh, Dr. Irfan Noorani, Dr. Shahnaz Aktar, Dr. Bandu Matyal, Dr. Dinesh, Dr. Imtiaz, Dr. Muzamil, Dr. Mukharam and Dr. Guru Raju also participated in the events.







## GDC Baramulla hosts IEC prog. under PM Internship scheme

■ HT News Network

BARAMULLA, APRIL 09: In a significant step towards youth empowerment and community outreach, an Information, Education, and Communication (IEC) programme was organized today at Government Degree College (GDC) Baramulla under the ambit of the Pradhan Mantri Internship scheme. The initiative aimed to harness the potential of young students by involving them directly in awareness generation related to key government schemes and developmental programmes. The event was organized by the District Employment and Counselling Centre (DECC) Baramulla, and was attended by Assistant Director, DECC Baramulla, Rahil Amin, who also serves as the Nodal Officer for the Pradhan Mantri Scholarship Internship scheme in the district.

## Training prog. for Hajj pilgrims of Ganderbal on April 12 at Jamia Masjid Beehama

■ HT News Network

GANDERBAL, APRIL 09: The Hajj orientation/training programme for the selected Hajj pilgrims of District Ganderbal about the Manasik-e-Hajj is scheduled on 12 April, 2025 at Markazi Hanfia Jamia Masjid Sharief Beehama Ganderbal at 10:30 A.M. As such all the selected Hajj pilgrims of the district are informed to attend the said training programme on the scheduled date and time.

## Journalist Farzana Mumtaz bags Dayawati Modi Stree Shakti award

■ ishfaq Aziz



Srinagar: In a significant development, Farzana Mumtaz, Editor-in-Chief of Weekly News Kashmir, bagged the prestigious Dayawati Modi Stree Shakti Award known also as Dayawati Modi Stree Shakti Samman. The award was given during the three day historical and first of its kind Women Conclave in Kashmir organised by Stree Shakti under leadership of Rekha Mody. The Dayawati Modi Stree Shakti Samman, instituted in 1998 by Stree Shakti, is an award by women, for women, and in memory of an extraordinary woman. It's awarded to a woman who dared to dream and had the ability to translate her dream into reality. Dayawati Modi Stree Shakti Samman, instituted in 1998, had Alka Saraogi, an eminent author and Hindi writer, as the winner of the twenty-first award. Farzana Mumtaz became the 22nd recipient of the award and the first from Jammu and Kashmir to bag this prestigious award. Farzana Mumtaz, in her acceptance speech, dedicated this award to all the women of the globe, especially those who are voiceless and have less say. As a matter of fact, Farzana Mumtaz's more than two-decade career in journalism has shined in diverse paradigms of media and leadership. Rekha Mody, Head of Stree Shakti, while presenting the prestigious Dayawati Saraswati Modi Stree Shakti award to Farzana Mumtaz, noted that this esteemed award has traveled from Kolkata to Delhi, Sri Lanka, and now Kashmir. She commended Farzana Mumtaz for her outstanding contributions to media and women's leadership, describing her as a true iron lady. Alka Sarogi, noted author and previous award recipient, observed that Dayawati Modi was a fierce lady who lived life on her own terms and changed the world through her actions. "It is the award dedicated to every downtrodden woman. The woman who cuts firewood in the forest or sells products to sustain her family. This award is dedicated to every woman," opined Farzana Mumtaz. The three-day Stree Shakti Women's Leaders Conclave witnessed a dynamic vibrancy and a lot of world-changing ideas. Ace scholar and professor of Sanskrit, Professor Kashinath from Nepal, got the Vidushi Vidyotma Stree Samman.

## 2 Killed, 4 Injured In Doda Road Accident

■ HT News Network

Jammu, April 9(GNS): Atleast two people were killed while as four others were injured in a road accident at Kastigarh's Shamthi area of Doda district on Wednesday. Officials told GNS that a load career (Bolera) bearing registration number JK06B1695 was coming from Ramban towards Doda when it met with an accident. In this incident two people were killed while four others were injured. All the injured have been shifted to GMC Doda for treatment.

# DC Kupwara chairs Block Diwas at Trehgam Appeals people to take benefit under PM Surya Ghar, HADP & other schemes

■ HT News Network

KUPWARA, APRIL 09: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Kupwara, Ayushi Sudan today chaired the weekly Block Diwas programme at Trehgam block of district Kupwara to listen to the grievances and developmental issues of the people. On her arrival, DC visited various stalls set up by different departments showcasing their schemes and achievements. She enquired from the concerned officers about the progress of these schemes in Trehgam block. People in large numbers attended the block diwas. District and Block level officers, besides, a large number of employees were also present at the event. In her address, DC said that the Government is committed to holistic development and welfare of the people especially belonging to far flung areas. She highlighted various Government schemes aimed for welfare of the people and urged upon the people to come forward and avail



the benefits of these schemes. Regarding Pradhan Mantri Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojna, Ayushi said that the scheme aims to reduce the electricity bill

of the consumers to make them self-reliant. She urged them to enroll themselves under the scheme which is heavily subsidized by the Government for the benefit

of the consumers. She appealed to the people to register themselves under the scheme to take benefit of free electricity which will reduce their electricity bills. While raising awareness on JK Samadhan portal, DC said that the portal provides opportunity to the citizens to raise their grievances through online mode and appealed to the people to register on the portal to get their grievances redressed which will save their time and efforts from physically visiting the government offices. Earlier, senior citizens and youth spoke and put forth their demands and issues of the area including beautification of Trehgam stadium, completion of ongoing JJM schemes, upgradation of link roads etc. Regarding power supply, she said upgradation of power infrastructure is under progress through RDSS scheme across the district which include establishment of new Receiving Stations, Distribution Transformers, Conductor, Poles and allied material and said that this will improve the overall power scenario of the district.

## DIPR Pulwama Organises Mega Function on Mahjoor Day

Life & Literary Legacy of Shaair-e-Kashmir Celebrated; Mushaira & Cultural Performances Held

■ HT News Network

Pulwama, 09 April: A mega function was held today at Mahjoor Memorial Govt Boys Higher Secondary School Pulwama to pay tribute to the legendary poet of Kashmir, Peerzada Ghulam Ahmad Mehjoor—widely revered as 'Shaair-e-Kashmir'. The event was organised on the occasion of Mahjoor Day to honour his timeless legacy, celebrate his profound contribution to Kashmiri language and literature and reflect upon the social, cultural and philosophical messages embedded in his poetry. The programme was organised by DIPR Pulwama in joint collaboration with the JK Mahjoor Foundation and District Cultural Society Pulwama



along with special invitation to A. R. Azaad Memorial Foundation. Peerzada Abdaal Mahjoor, grandson of Peerzada Ghulam Ahmad Mehjoor and President of J&K Mahjoor Foundation, graced the occasion as the

Chief Guest while Dr. Peerzada Farhat Ahmad, ACD Pulwama, also presided over the event as the Chief Guest. Among others the event was attended by CMO Pulwama, BDO Pulwama and students in large num-

bers. The event witnessed enthusiastic participation from renowned poets, literary figures and cultural enthusiasts from across the valley. Delivering the welcome address, District Information Officer Ms. Wajeeza expressed her gratitude to the participating poets and literary organisations for their presence. She reiterated Department of Information & PR (DIPR) Pulwama's commitment to preserving the district's cultural identity by providing platforms that uphold and sustain the district's rich cultural heritage.

This was followed by a vibrant Mushaira, where noted poets from various parts of the valley presented soulful recitations in Kashmiri, paying rich tributes to Mahjoor.

## One-day Educational Conference held to promote Community Participation in Shopian

■ HT News Network

SHOPIAN, APRIL 09: A one-day conference on the theme 'Community Engagement and Participation: Partnership with Stakeholders for Educational Process' was held at Shopian. The event organized by CEO Shopian witnessed active participation from educators, administrators, and community representatives to deliberate on the significance of collective efforts in enhancing the education system. Dy. CEO, Showkat Ahmad underscored the importance of collaboration between schools and communities. Speakers shared valuable insights and practical experiences to foster effective school-community linkages.

The sessions witnessed enthusiastic participation and thoughtful discussions, reflecting a shared commitment to strengthening the educational ecosystem in the district. CEO Shopian, Bashir Ahmad Malla delivered the valedictory address, appreciating the speakers and participants for their valuable contributions and reiterating the need for sustained stakeholder engagement for meaningful educational outcomes.

## Dist admin Kulgam intensifies campaign against Drug Abuse

Series of daily awareness camps organized under Nasha Mukht Abhiyan

■ HT News Network

KULGAM, APRIL 09: In a continued effort to combat the growing menace of drug abuse, the District Administration Kulgam has intensified its awareness campaign under the Nasha Mukht Jammu & Kashmir Abhiyan.

In this connection, a series of awareness camps are being conducted daily across the district at educational institutions, workplaces, Panchayats, Municipalities, and other community spaces. These camps aim to educate the youth, engage parents, and sensitize the general public about the physical, psychological, and social consequences of drug abuse. Special emphasis is being laid on early intervention, community participation. During the sessions, speakers stressed the importance of collective responsibility and community engagement in addressing this



pressing issue. They called for united efforts to eliminate the scourge of drug abuse from society. To further strengthen the campaign, the District Administration is distributing Information, Education, and Communication (IEC) material such as pamphlets, booklets and posters among participants to enhance public awareness and reinforce key messages.

## DC Baramulla visits Baba-Gael in Uri

Assures swift redressal of public grievances

■ HT News Network

BARAMULLA, APRIL 09: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Baramulla, Minga Sherpa, today visited the remote border village of Baba-Gael in Uri Sub-division to assess on-ground developmental issues and engaging directly with the habitants living close to the border to understand and resolve any infrastructural and service delivery challenges faced by them. During the visit, the locals put forth several pressing issues affecting their daily lives which include frequent wild animal attacks resulting in loss of life and property, need for macadamization and upgradation of road infrastructure, construction of retaining walls in landslide-prone areas, and improvement in healthcar and education facilities. The DC gave a patient hearing to all the concerns raised by the villagers and assured the public that the administration is committed to the development



and welfare of border residents and that all genuine issues would be addressed in a time-bound manner. e further issued directions to the concerned departments to conduct on-ground assessments for necessary action, especially in critical areas like road connectivity and prevention of landslides.

Earlier, DC visited the under-construction Water Supply Scheme at Shakot-Warikha being constructed under NABARD, with a capacity of 50,000 gallons. The concerned Executive Engineer apprised that 70 percent of the work has been completed.

# Awareness prog. held for LSUC, support for Admission/ Re-admission in schools at Budgam

■ HT News Network

BUDGAM, APRIL 09: In a significant move, District Legal Services Authority (DLSA) Budgam in collaboration with Juvenile Justice Board, Budgam organized an awareness programme for Legal Services Unit for Children (LSUC), Support for Admission/ Re-admission in Schools at Juvenile Justice Board Budgam.

The programme was organized under the aegis of J&K Legal Services Authority and under the guidance of O.P. Baghat, Chairman DLSA (Pr.& Distt. Judge) Budgam and under the supervision of Nusrat Ali Hakak, Secretary DLSA Budgam and Shabbir Ayaz, Principal Magistrate Juvenile Justice Board Budgam. Sandeep Kour, Member Child Welfare Committee Budgam gave a brief introduction about the programme.



Advocate. Feroz Ahmad Khan Member Child Welfare Committee, Budgam, briefed the audience about LSUC and about educational opportunities for children particularly those rescued from trafficking, abuse, and other challenging circumstances and how they can be supported for Admission/Re-admission in Schools.

Mehreen Zafer, Panel lawyer DLSA Budgam briefed the audience about the role of DLSA in rendering the services. She urged the collaborative partners including Child Welfare Committees and Child help line to raise awareness about the free and competent Legal aid meant for the juveniles and other marginalized sections of society.

In her address she also apprised the audience about specific legal provisions for vulnerable children, including those with disabilities, transgender children, and children at risk of trafficking or abuse. She clarified legal provisions, children's rights, and remedies available through legal services for children in need. NALSA Helpline (15100), Child Helpline (1098), Divyangjan Helpline (14456), and other relevant helplines were also displayed in the programme to ensure that children and their families are aware of legal and child protection helplines. The programme witnessed active participation of Members of LSUC, staff of Child Welfare Committee, Juvenile Justice Board Budgam, members of Child Helpline Budgam and Staff and PLVs (Adhikar Mitras) of DLSA Budgam.







## DC assesses patient care scenario at Associate Hospital GMC Doda Emphasises Cleanliness, Infrastructure Upkeep

HT News Network

DODA, APRIL 09: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Harvinder Singh conducted a comprehensive inspection of the Associate Hospital, Government Medical College (GMC) Doda to assess healthcare facilities and general patient care scenario in the District's premier health institution. During the visit, the DC took a round of the Hospital and inspected the Pediatric Ward, ICU, Cardiac Care Unit, Orthopedic Ward, Dialysis Unit, Surgical Ward, Medicine Ward, Emergency Ward, and the Control Room. He also inspected the Casualty Medical Officer office, Matron Office, and Emergency Triage Room. The DC Doda took note of the cleanliness and hygiene standards in the hospital and emphasized the need for regular and thorough cleaning of all washrooms, bathrooms, wards, and common areas. He stressed on maintaining high standards of sanitation for the safety and well-being of patients and staff alike. He also reviewed the functioning of the Ayushman Bharat PM-JAY registration



counter and checked the attendance and functioning of the GMC staff room. Directions were issued to ensure proper atten-

dance and accountability of hospital staff. The Power Development Department (PDD) was asked to carry out necessary

electrical repairs in the hospital premises on priority. In addition, DC Doda issued specific instructions to security personnel deployed at the hospital to remain vigilant, especially in critical areas such as emergency wards and entry-exit points. He asked security staff to ensure round-the-clock presence, proper visitor management and coordination with hospital administration to maintain a secure and patient-friendly environment. Security staff was also advised to maintain daily activity logs and promptly report any unusual activity to the concerned authorities. Later, DC Harvinder Singh, accompanied by SSP Sandeep Kumar Mehta inspected the police post located adjacent to the Associate Hospital. The DC and SSP inspected all rooms and issued directions for necessary repairs and maintenance to ensure proper functioning of the post. He also reviewed the functioning of the Ayushman Bharat PM-JAY registration counter and checked the attendance and functioning of the GMC staff room. Directions were issued to ensure proper attendance and accountability of hospital staff.

## Div Com inaugurates 2-day mega flower show at Jakhani Park Udhampur

HT News Network

UDHAMPUR, APRIL 09: District Administration Udhampur on Wednesday organised a two-day mega Flower Show at Jakhani Park, aimed at promoting tourism and environmental consciousness in the region.

The event was inaugurated by Divisional Commissioner Jammu Ramesh Kumar as the chief guest. He was accompanied by Deputy Commissioner Saloni Rai.

Addressing the gathering, the Divisional Commissioner congratulated the District Administration for successfully organizing the flower show. He emphasized that Jammu & Kashmir is renowned for its natural beauty and tourism continues to be a major contributor to the Union Territory's economy. "Jakhani Park, with its serene landscape can serve as a prominent destination for travelers," he said.

The Divisional Commissioner further appreciated setting up of awareness and exhibition cum sale stalls by the government departments, providing a platform to artisans to showcase their products and services. He expressed hope that the Flower Show becomes an annual feature, celebrating nature, culture and community involvement. He commended the presentation of a Nukkad Natak on drug abuse, terming it as a significant initiative to educate the youth about its adverse effects and guiding them towards a positive path. Several government departments including Agriculture, Horticulture, Health, Animal Husbandry, Sheep Husbandry, Social Welfare, Handicrafts and others had established stalls to generate awareness about government schemes and services. The Divisional Commissioner along with the Deputy Commissioner, inspected these stalls, interacted with the officers and reviewed the implementation.

## DC Kishtwar reviews preparations for Multi-Specialty Surgery Camp

HT News Network

KISHTWAR, APRIL 09: Deputy Commissioner (Chairman District Red Cross Society) Rajesh Kumar Shavan today chaired a meeting to review the preparations for the Multi-Specialty Surgical Camp being organized by Rotary International here at the District Hospital.

During the meeting, the CMO provided an update on the screening process, informing the DC that 448 patients have already been screened across various blocks for multiple health conditions. These patients are now ready for pre-anaesthetic check-ups and other necessary diagnostic tests before undergoing surgery.

The DC emphasized the need for effective patient mobilization and directed the concerned authorities to arrange transportation for the patients.

The CMO apprised the DC that all Block Medical Officers (BMOs) have nominated dedicated Nodal Officers for each block, who will collaborate closely with the District Hospital authorities to ensure smooth patient coordination.

The Medical Superintendent District Hos-



pital informed that the pre-operative investigations and pre-anaesthetic check-ups will start from tomorrow.

He also confirmed that the operation theatres and post-operative wards have been set up in accordance with medical protocols, and all hospital staff are on standby to ensure the smooth execution of the camp.

To ensure safety, proper sanitation measures have been implemented in the hospital, maintaining a hygienic environment for patients

and staff alike.

The DC assured that all necessary resources and support would be provided to ensure the success of the Rotary International Multi-Specialty Surgical Camp, which promises to significantly benefit the health and well-being of the people of Kishtwar.

The meeting was attended by CMO Dr. Rajinder Kumar, Dr. MSDH Dr. Yudhvir Singh Kotwal, and Block Medical Officers (BMOs) from all Blocks among other concerned staff.

## DC convenes special outreach camp for nomadic population at Palwara Daryal- Rajouri

HT News Network

RAJOURI, APRIL 9: In a significant initiative aimed at addressing the concerns of the nomadic population, Deputy Commissioner Abhishek Sharma today convened a one-day Special Outreach Camp here at Village Palwara-Daryal in Block Budhal Old. The outreach programme primarily focused on understanding and redressing the issues faced by the nomadic population during their seasonal migration. The DC inspected stalls set up by Health, Sheep Husbandry, Labour and Animal Husbandry Departments, besides Self Help Groups. He interacted with members of the nomadic community and encouraged them to avail government schemes. A wide range of grievances were raised by the members of the community, seeking road connectivity from Gala to Talyani, electricity connections, establishment of camping stations

en-route to Kashmir, proper functioning of tribal schools, release of pending MGNREGA payments, renovation of school buildings, road to Danna Top, posting of mobile school teachers, provision of passenger sheds, tents and solar lights, and waiver of electricity charges during migration. DC Abhishek Sharma gave a patient hearing to all the issues and redressed several grievances on the spot, much to the satisfaction of the nomadic people. The community expressed heartfelt gratitude to the Deputy Commissioner for organizing the special camp and bringing the administration to their doorstep. In a significant move, the DC directed the Assistant Executive Engineer (AEE) to receive applications regarding the stoppage of electricity bills during the migration period and take appropriate action. He also instructed the Chief Education Officer (CEO) to visit the mobile school in the area and submit a factual report on its functioning.

## 30 local youth complete 3-month data entry operation course at Govt Polytechnic Chanderkote

HT News Network

RAMBAN, APRIL 9: Government Polytechnic College (GPC), Chanderkote, Ramban today organized a certificate distribution ceremony for the successful candidates of the three-month Skill Development Course in Data Entry Operation. The course was conducted by GPC Chanderkote and sponsored by the District Employment & Counselling Centre (DECC), under the guidance of Deputy Commissioner Baseer-Ul-Haq Chaudhary. Assistant Director Employment Amit Kumar was the chief guest. The Principal of the host institution Er. Vivek Mahajan expressed gratitude to DECC for selecting GPC Ramban as the training venue for this significant initiative aimed at youth empowerment. Also present were, Head of Department (Electronics & Communication) Er Pawan Kumar and Course Coordinator Er. Aabid Hussain, who played a key role in the successful execution of the program. The course, which commenced on December 30, 2024, and concluded on March 29, 2025, trained 30 local youth in data entry operations. It was aimed at equipping unskilled youth with practical skills to enhance their employability. Each trainee also received a monthly stipend of 1000 for three months, provided by DECC Ramban. The ceremony was chaired by Principal and Assistant Director Employment. In their addresses, both congratulated the trainees and emphasized the importance of skill development for self-reliance and livelihood generation. AD Employment reaffirmed the department's commitment to continue such initiatives for the benefit of the youth of Ramban.

## Rajouri: ARTO Seizes 16 Vehicles, Challans 51 for Violations;

HT News Network

RAJOURI, APRIL 9: In a major crackdown on traffic violators, Assistant Regional Transport Officer (ARTO) Rajesh Gupta has seized 16 vehicles and challaned 51 others in past 3 days for plying without Fitness Certificates and other serious violations. A fine of Rs. 1.72 lakh was also recovered on the spot.

The enforcement drive was launched on the directions of the Transport Commissioner J&K Vishesh Paul Mahajan and Deputy Commissioner Abhishek Sharma with a special focus on ensuring road safety and compliance with transport regulations.

In addition to the enforcement action, the enforcement team also conducted a comprehensive audit of school buses operating in the district. The audit aimed to ensure that all school transport vehicles adhere to safety norms and are properly documented in terms of fitness, insurance, permits, and driver credentials.

The ARTO Rajouri stated that such drives will continue to promote safe and disciplined driving practices and to curb violations that endanger public safety.

The district administration has urged vehicle owners and transport operators to ensure compliance with all legal requirements and cooperate with the enforcement teams.

## Nasha Mukht Bharat Abhiyan IEC Campaign kick-started across Municipal areas of Kishtwar District

HT News Network

KISHTWAR, APRIL 09: To combat the challenges of drug menace, an Information, Education, and Communication (IEC) Awareness Campaign was today launched in the Municipal areas of the District Kishtwar under Nasha Mukht Bharat Abhiyan.

The campaign, conducted under the supervision of Deputy Commissioner (DC) Rajesh Kumar Shavan, has received an overwhelming response from the local community.

The inaugural event of the campaign was held in Ward No. 1 of Kishtwar Town, where informative sessions were led by resource persons from eight key departments, including Health, Police, Education, Rural Development Department (RDD), and Ex-PRIs. The Resource Persons were nominated by the District administration to raise awareness and educate the public about the devastating consequences of drug abuse.

## 84 Bn CRPF unveils Memorial stone of its brave hearts at Digdol

HT News Network



RAMBAN APRIL 09: While the country is celebrating Valour Day, 84 Bn CRPF, under the aegis of DIG CRPF Jammu North Ops Range Vivek Bhandral, unveiled a memorial stone dedicated to the supreme sacrifice of its 02 brave personnel. Sh Shailendra Vikram Singh, then DIG CRPF Srinagar North and Constable/Dvr Naveen Kumar of the 144 Bn laid down their lives in the line of duty at Digdol on 15 Dec 2019.

The memorial stone was unveiled by Sh N Ranbir Singh Commandant in the presence of Sh A K Dixit Second in Command and personnel of 84Bn, Sh Zaheer Ahmed Ex-Sarpanch and prominent members of Digdol and media personnel. During the function, floral tributes were paid to the 02 CRPF brave hearts.

Speaking on the occasion, Commandant 84 Bn stated that the memorial stone signifies CRPF's steadfast commitment to honoring its heroes and upholding its legacy of valour. CRPF, with approx 250 Bn, is the largest Central Armed Police Force in the country and deployed for multifarious duties across the length and breadth of the country.

The 84 Bn CRPF is securing a 47 km stretch of the NH 44, a major lifeline connecting Kashmir Valley,

## District Admin Jammu organises series of impactful anti-drug awareness events

HT News Network

JAMMU, APRIL 9: The District Administration Jammu, under the directives of Deputy Commissioner Sachin Kumar Vaishya and the overall supervision of Additional Deputy Commissioner Ansuja Jamwal today continued with impactful Information, Education and Communication (IEC) programmes to combat drug abuse. ne such event was held

at Tawi Mahal, Udheywala, drawing participation from over a hundred attendees, including local residents, ex-corporators, ex-Sarpanches, government officials and members of the general public. The campaign featured presentations and speeches from resource persons deputed by the District Administration. These included Tehsildar Jammu North Aman Kumar Anand; SDPO Domana Mudassar Chowdhary; representatives from the Social Welfare Department



Kunal Gupta, Health Department Dr. Sandeep; Naib Tehsildar Muthi, Mehara Singh and Education Department representatives Shanti Saroop. Through their addresses, the experts highlighted the dangers of drug abuse, its societal impact and the importance of rehabilitation efforts. A special cultural performance by artists Mohinder, Surjit and Balbir from the Information Department captivated the audience. Utilising music and art -the powerful mediums of communication,

they sensitised attendees about the menace of drug addiction and its connection to crime within society. Community Hall Trilokpur in Tehsil Jammu West also hosted a similar event where local residents gathered to discuss preventive measures against drug abuse. These initiatives are part of the month-long IEC campaign launched by the J&K Government to combat substance abuse through sustained awareness efforts across panchayats, urban local bodies.







# Global institutions now looking towards India because of its progress: PM Modi

## AGENCIES

NEW DELHI, APR 09 (UNI)

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday said that the global institutions are now looking towards India because of its progress, which opens pathways for others.

Inaugurating the Navkar Mahamantra Divas at Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi, he underscored that the world's trust in India is deepening, with India's efforts and results becoming a source of inspiration.

He connected this to the Jain philosophy of "Parasparopagraho Jivanam," emphasizing that life thrives on mutual cooperation. PM Modi noted that this perspective has raised global expectations from India, and the nation has intensified its efforts.

The Prime Minister remarked that in today's world of information, knowledge is abundant, but without wisdom, it lacks depth. He emphasized that Jainism teaches the balance of knowledge and wisdom to find the right path.

He highlighted the



importance of this balance for the youth, saying where technology must be complemented by human touch, and skills must be accompanied by the soul. Modi stated, "The Navkar Mahamantra can serve as a source of wisdom and direction for the new generation."

Addressing the pressing issue of climate change, he identified sustainable lifestyles as the solution and highlighted India's launch of Mission LiFE.

He remarked that the Jain community has been living the principles of simplicity, restraint, and sustainability for centuries. Referring to the Jain principle of Aparigraha, he emphasized the need to spread these values

widely.

The Prime Minister urged everyone, regardless of their location, to become flag bearers of Mission LiFE. During the event, the Prime Minister unveiled "nine resolutions" and asked the gathering to take these gatherings aimed to promote sustainability for a healthy nation.

The first resolution being 'Water Conservation', he recalled the words of Buddhi Sagar Maharaj Ji, who predicted 100 years ago that water would be sold in shops. The PM emphasized the need to value and save every drop of water.

The second resolution is to 'plant a tree in Mother's Name' and

highlighted the planting of over 100 crore trees in recent months and urged everyone to plant a tree in their mother's name and nurture it like her blessings.

Modi mentioned 'cleanliness mission' as the third resolution. 'Vocal for Local' being the fourth resolution, he encouraged the promotion of locally made products, turning them global, and supporting items that carry the essence of Indian soil and the sweat of Indian workers.

The fifth resolution is to 'explore India' and he urged people to explore India's diverse states, cultures, and regions before traveling abroad, emphasizing the uniqueness and value of every corner of the country.

'Adopting Natural Farming' being the sixth resolution, the Prime Minister referred to the Jain principle of One living being should not harm another and called for freeing Mother Earth from chemicals, supporting farmers, and promoting natural farming.

He also proposed 'Healthy Lifestyle' as the

seventh resolution and advocated for a return to Indian dietary traditions, including millets (Shri Anna), reducing oil consumption by 10%, and maintaining health through moderation and restraint.

He proposed 'Incorporating Yoga and Sports' as the eighth resolution and emphasized making yoga and sports a part of daily life, whether at home, work, school, or parks, to ensure physical health and mental peace.

Highlighting the importance of assisting the underprivileged, whether by holding a hand or filling a plate, as the true essence of service, he proposed 'Helping the Poor' as the ninth and final resolution. He emphasised that these resolutions align with the principles of Jainism and the vision of a sustainable and harmonious future.

"These nine resolutions will infuse new energy into individuals and provide a fresh direction to the younger generation. Their implementation will foster peace, harmony, and compassion within society," he added.

# Trump says pharma imports will be hit with 'major' tariffs; could impact India's pharma sector

## AGENCIES

WASHINGTON/NEW DELHI, APR 9 (UNI)

US President Donald Trump has said that pharmaceutical imports will soon be hit with "major" tariffs as part of his efforts to drive manufacturing back to the US, a move that could hit India, a leading global pharma producer, hard.

While drug imports evaded the first round of tariffs that Trump imposed on countries around the world, the US president said they will not be spared.

"We're going to be announcing very shortly a major tariff on pharmaceuticals," he said at a dinner of the National Republican Congressional Committee on Tuesday.

"And when they hear that, they will leave China. They will leave other places because they have to sell – most of their product is sold here and they're going to be opening up their plants all over the place," Trump said, CBS news reported.

Domestic drug manufacturing has shrunk dramatically in recent decades. Most production of active pharmaceutical



ingredients has moved to China and other countries, according to the Food and Drug Administration.

Trump announced global tariffs of 10 percent on hundreds of countries on April 2 and additional reciprocal levies are scheduled to start Wednesday, including a minimum 104 percent tariff on Chinese imports.

Trump gave no details on the pharmaceutical tariffs. India's pharmaceutical industry, with its robust global footprint, is the fifth-largest contributor to India's manufacturing GVA. India, already the largest global supplier of generic medicines, fulfills approximately 20% of global generics demand.

India, often referred to as "the pharmacy of the world", is the largest provider of generic medications by volume and

supplies more than 60% of the world's vaccines. Indian pharmaceutical companies, such as Sun Pharma, Cipla, and Dr. Reddy's Laboratories, play a significant role in global healthcare by manufacturing and exporting low-cost generic drugs and vaccines to developing countries and regulated markets like the US, UK, and EU, according to reports.

The US President

unleashed a sweeping

slate of tariffs on friends

and foes alike last week,

sending stocks plunging

and roiling the global

economy. He's doubled

down in the days since.

The president used his

speech to Republican law-

makers promote his economic

agenda, a whole-sale

realignment of trade with

the ultimate vision of

bringing factories and

investment back into the

country.

# Cabinet approves rail, road projects worth Rs 3,210 crore

## AGENCIES

NEW DELHI, APRIL 9 (UNI)

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday approved major infrastructure projects worth Rs 3,210.31 crore including a road project in Punjab and Haryana, and a rail line doubling project in Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu.

The Cabinet also gave its nod to the Modernization of Command Area Development and Water Management (M-CADWM) as a sub-scheme of Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana (PMKSY) for the period 2025-2026 with an initial total outlay of Rs 1,600 crore.

Briefing media on Cabinet decisions, Union Information and Broadcasting (I&B) Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said, "Today, three historic decisions have been taken in the Cabinet, which will have far-reaching positive impact for the middle class of the country, for the farmers and for the entire logistics sector."

Construction of six-lane Zirakpur bypass in Punjab and Haryana with a total length of 19.2 km is proposed on hybrid annuity mode with an



estimated cost of Rs 1,878.31 crore.

"The Zirakpur Bypass starts from the junction with NH-7 (Chandigarh-Bathinda) in Zirakpur and follows the Punjab Government Master Plan in Punjab and terminates at the junction with NH-5 (Zirakpur-Parwanoo) in Panchkula of Haryana, thus avoiding the highly urbanized and congested stretch of Zirakpur in Punjab and Panchkula in Haryana," an official statement said.

The doubling of Tirupati-Pakala-Katpadi single railway line Section (104 km) in Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu approved by the Cabinet today is estimated to cost Rs 1,332 crore.

"The enhanced line capacity will improve mobility, providing enhanced efficiency and service reliability for Indian Railways. The multi-tracking proposal

will ease operations and reduce congestion, providing the much-required infrastructural development on the busiest sections across Indian Railways," the government statement said.

The M-CADWM project is aimed at modernization of the irrigation water supply network to supply of irrigation water from existing canals or other sources in a designated cluster.

"The initial approval is for taking up pilot projects across various agroclimatic zones in the country by challenge funding to the states. Based on the learning's in design and structuring of these projects, National Plan for Command Area Development and Water Management will be launched starting from April 2026 for the 16th Finance Commission period," the official press release on the Cabinet decision said.

# Govt favouring industrialists, increasing social inequality, alleges Kharage

## AGENCIES

AHMEDABAD, APR 9 (UNI)

Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge on Wednesday said that a "dictatorial" atmosphere is prevailing in the country, and national assets are being "handed over" to select industrialists, which is widening the gap between the rich and the poor.

While addressing delegates on the final day of the Congress session, Kharge stated, "Common people are facing oppression, Opposition is being targeted, and Dalits are being subjected to discrimination – something that cannot be forgiven."

He stated that former Congress president Sonia Gandhi believes the education system is the biggest issue facing society. She emphasizes the urgent need for reform to ensure that children from poor and Dalit communities are not denied access to education and have the opportunity to pursue higher studies.

Calling the tribal the original inhabitants of the country, Kharge said that the BJP is referring to them as Vanvasis, attempting to marginalize them by giving a new term. He added that incidents of atrocities against Dalits are happening regularly, yet they are

largely ignored. The media turns a blind eye to these issues, fearing that highlighting such incidents could take their owners to jail.

Alleging that a monopoly is gradually being created in the country's economy, Kharge said, "Public assets are steadily being handed over to private hands. The sale of Public Sector Undertakings (PSUs) is resulting in the loss of lakhs of government jobs and undermining reservation benefits for SC, ST, and OBC communities. Instead of providing more opportunities and reservations for Dalits and backward classes, the Modi government is systematically handing over PSUs to its close associates. If this trend continues, there's a fear that one day, Narendra Modi might end up selling the entire country".

Kharge emphasized that the Congress party needs dynamic and energetic individuals to move forward, and it is only with their support that the party can progress.

He urged all members to stay active and work towards strengthening the organization. Delivering a clear message to the party workers, he said that those unwilling to take responsibility should retire, and those not contributing should take a break.

# RBI cuts repo rate by 25 basis points to 6 pc, lowers GDP growth forecast for FY26

## AGENCIES

MUMBAI, APR 9 (UNI)

Delivering second straight cut in key interest rate in the wake of softening retail inflation, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI)'s Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) on Wednesday decided to cut policy repo rate by 25 basis points to 6% with immediate effect.

"After a detailed assessment of the evolving macroeconomic and financial conditions and outlook, the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) voted unanimously to reduce the policy repo rate by 25 basis points to 6% with immediate effect," RBI Governor Sanjay Malhotra said while announcing the first bi-monthly monetary policy of the current fiscal.

Consequently, the standing deposit facility (SDF) rate under the liquidity adjustment facility shall stand adjusted to 5.75% and the marginal standing facility (MSF) rate and the Bank Rate shall stand adjusted to 6.25%. The MPC also decided to change the stance from 'neutral' to 'accommodative'.

Besides relief for homebuyers and other borrowers, the repo rate cut is expected to boost economic growth which faces multiple headwinds especially trade disruptions and sluggish private investment.

On rationale of the monetary policy decision, Malhotra said that the MPC noted that the inflation is currently below the target.

"It is supported by a sharp fall in food inflation. Moreover, there is a decisive improvement in the inflation outlook. As per projections, there is now a greater confidence of a durable alignment of headline inflation with



the target of 4% over a 12-month horizon," he said.

Marking the first rate cut in nearly five years, the central bank had in February this year reduced the repo rate by 25 basis points to 6.25%.

One basis point is equivalent to 0.01%.

While announcing the monetary policy, the RBI Governor said that the current financial year has begun on an anxious note for the global economy.

"The global economic outlook is fast changing. The recent trade tariff related measures have exacerbated uncertainties clouding the economic outlook across regions, posing new headwinds for global growth and inflation," Governor Malhotra said.

He, however, noted that the Indian economy has made steady progress towards the goals of price stability and sustained growth.

Amid ongoing trade tariff war and its potential impact on India, the RBI has cut India's GDP growth forecast for the current financial year 2025-26 to 6.5% from 6.7% growth projected earlier.

"Real GDP growth for 2025-26 is now projected

at 6.5%, with Q1 at 6.5%; Q2 at 6.7%; Q3 at 6.6% and Q4 at 6.3%," Malhotra said.

He said that the downward revision essentially reflects the impact of global trade and policy uncertainties.

Noting that the outlook for food inflation has turned decisively positive, the RBI has projected headline inflation for 2025-26 at 4%, with Q1 at 3.6%; Q2 at 3.9%; Q3 at 3.8%; and Q4 at 4.4%.

Commenting on the MPC decisions, Indranil Pan, Chief Economist at Yes Bank said, "Given projections by the Skymet of a normal monsoon, the risks to food inflation are likely reduced. At the other end of the spectrum, global growth risks have unleashed a sharp softening in crude oil and other commodity prices, and this is also a positive for India's inflation dynamics."

"Overall, the confidence that inflation would remain aligned to the 4% target has magnified. Given a 4% inflation target, the scope of pushing repo rate down to 5.50% in this cycle has opened. Consequently, we expect the RBI to cut in June and also in August," he added.

# President Droupadi Murmu arrives in Slovak capital, accorded ceremonial welcome

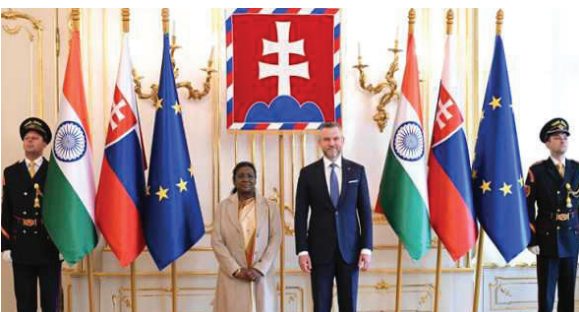
## AGENCIES

NEW DELHI, APR 9 (UNI)

President Droupadi Murmu arrived in Slovakia and was warmly received by President Peter Pellegrini of the Slovak Republic at the Presidential Palace in Bratislava on Wednesday.

The President's Office said in a post on X:

"President Droupadi



Murmu was received by President Peter Pellegrini

of the Slovak Republic at the Presidential

Palace in Bratislava. She was extended a traditional Slovak welcome with bread and salt by a couple in folk dress. The President was accorded a ceremonial welcome with the Guard of Honour."

The MEA spokesperson said:

"President Droupadi Murmu @rashtrapatihvn arrived at the Presidential Palace in Bratis-

va today.

"Warmly received by President @PellegriniP\_ of Slovakia and accorded a ceremonial welcome with Guard of Honour.

"This is the first Presidential visit from India to Slovakia in nearly three decades."

President Murmu arrived in Bratislava from Lisbon after concluding her two-day state visit.



# Spring Fruits That Boost Collagen in Your Body



SHAHNAZ HUSAIN

Collagen isn't just a buzzword, it's the glue holding your body together. Collagen comprises amino acid chains which is essential for the structure of the skin, bones, muscles, and tendons.

Collagen is the protein that gives skin its structure, suppleness, and stretch.

It's also involved in essential processes like helping your blood to clot, helping wounds to heal and protecting the nervous system.

Collagen is the most abundant protein in the body, making up 30% of its total protein. It's the structural foundation of your connective tissues: ligaments,

tendons, and cartilage, keeping them strong and flexible.

Unfortunately, starting from the mid 20s, our natural production of collagen decreases up to 1.5% per year, giving way to stiffer joints, slower muscle repair, signs of skin aging such as wrinkles, dryness, sagging skin or even pigmentation spots. So it is important to both preserve the collagen you have and stimulate your skin to produce it faster.

Our body is capable of producing all of the collagen one needs if you eat a balanced diet.

Foods that contain gelatine are a good source of collagen, because gelatine is essentially cooked collagen.

Because your body is capable of producing all of the collagen you need if you eat a balanced diet, supplements may not be necessary for everyone.

Eating collagen-rich foods or foods that boost collagen production may also help create the building blocks you need for your skin goals. Incorporate vitamin C-rich fruits like citrus fruits (oranges, lemons, grapefruits), berries (blueberries, raspberries, strawberries), and tropical fruits (kiwi, pineapple, mango) into

your diet, as vitamin C is essential for collagen synthesis

1---Kiwifruit --- They're sweet, easy to eat, and highly nutritious.

Kiwifruit contains large amounts of vitamin C, which helps the body produce collagen, which can reduce the appearance of fine lines and wrinkles, giving you a smoother and more youthful complexion.

It gives the skin its fullness, flexibility and elasticity

The fruit contains approximately 80% water content, providing natural hydration benefits for the skin.

This high water content fruit helps keep skin soft and supple when consumed regularly. For optimal results, either consume kiwis or simply apply a kiwi slice to your skin.

You can exfoliate and moisturise your skin by applying kiwi slices on your face. Your epidermis becomes softer and plumper as a result of this gentle exfoliation

Eating kiwi can help you reach optimal blood levels of vitamin C

2---Pineapple----- Pineapple contains vitamin C and bromelain, which boost collagen production, reduce inflammation,

and promote a clear, glowing complexion.

These antioxidants can help reduce wrinkles, improve overall skin texture, and minimize skin damage from sun and pollution exposure.

Pineapple's vitamin C content encourages the production of collagen, a protein matrix that gives your skin its structure while maintaining its plasticity. Pineapple can help prevent damage to skin cells caused by free radicals. It may help promote wound healing by supporting the production of new skin cells.

Pineapple hydrates and brightens skin, while reducing the appearance of circles under eyes, protecting against sun damage.

One cup of pineapple contains 78.9 milligrams of vitamin C. That's more than the recommended dietary allowance for adult women (which is 75 mg per day) and close to the recommendation for men (90 mg per day).

Pineapple is lower in calories than other sweet treats, so if you enjoy a serving of pineapple versus an ice cream cone for your nightly dessert, you may consume fewer calories and, in

turn, lose weight.

3---Guava---A lesser-known superfruit, guava is rich in Vitamin C, antioxidants and lycopene, which prevent aging and improve skin health. Guavas are a bulbous fruit with a green rind and pink or white flesh. Guava is a fantastic, natural way to boost collagen production and improve skin elasticity, making it a beauty secret hiding in plain sight.

The high vitamin C content of guava helps in boosting immunity, improves collagen production, and may naturally protect against free radical damage. The fiber content in guava helps in digestion, controls blood sugar levels, and promotes heart health.

The high concentration of vitamin C content in the fruit helps your body fight against viruses and pathogens and maintain skin health.

Guava has antioxidants like lycopene and beta-carotene that help fight inflammation and support eye health. Adding guava to the daily diet can enhance overall health, improve digestion, strengthen immunity, and improve skin health, which makes for a healthy option to add to the diet.

Very rich in vitamin A and vitamin C both of which act as an antioxidant for the skin. It can help support healthy skin, reduce wrinkles and slow down ageing

4---Berries----Berries like strawberries, blueberries, and blackberries are a great way to add vitamin C to your diet, a nutrient that helps your body build collagen. Berries are rich in antioxidants which play a crucial role in maintaining and producing collagen.

The antioxidants protect your collagen from damage, while Vitamin C directly supports new collagen growth.

Incorporating these fruits alongside other natural sources of collagen supports overall skin health and reduces inflammation.

A cup of strawberries has nearly 100% of your daily target for vitamin C, and a cup of raspberries or blackberries has about 35% of your daily C goal.

If you eat 1 cup of berry daily, you can keep the symptoms of ageing away for a long time.

**The author is international fame beauty expert and is called herbal queen of India**

## New antiviral chewing gum may fight infection, curb spread of flu & herpes virus

### AGENCIES

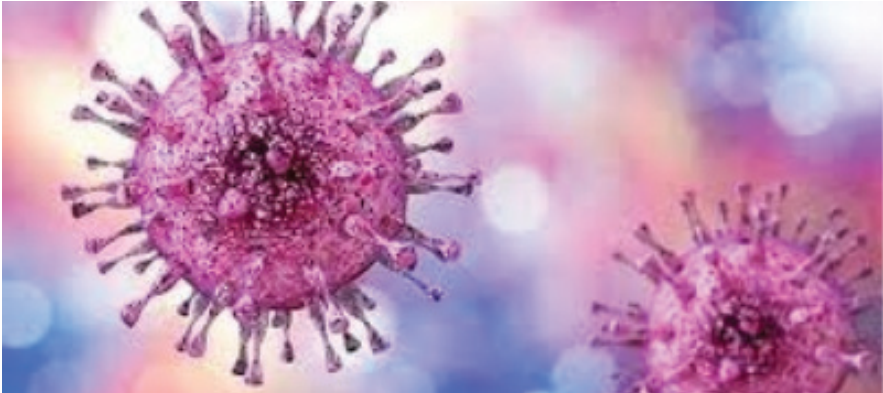
NEW DELHI

A team of US and Finnish researchers have developed a new antiviral chewing gum that showed the potential to substantially reduce viral loads of two herpes simplex viruses and two influenza A strains in experimental models.

Seasonal influenza epidemics occur annually, causing a substantial global disease burden. The herpes simplex virus-1 (HSV-1), spread primarily through oral contact, infects over two-thirds of the global population.

Low vaccination rates for influenza viruses and the lack of an HSV vaccine underscore the need for a new approach.

Researchers at the University of Pennsylvania targetted the oral cavity to fight against these viruses, which are transmitted more via the mouth than the nose.



In the study, published in the journal Molecular Therapy, the team tested the ability of chewing gum made from lablab beans. They tested Lablab purpureus -- which naturally contains an antiviral trap protein (FRIL) -- to neutralise HSV-1 and HSV-2, and two influenza A strains H1N1 and H3N2.

The chewing gum formulation allowed for effective and consistent release of FRIL at sites of viral infection.

They demonstrated that 40 milligrams of a two-

gram bean gum tablet was adequate to reduce viral loads by more than 95 per cent.

Importantly, the researchers prepared the gum as a clinical-grade drug product to comply with the US FDA specifications for drug products and found the gum to be safe.

"These observations augur well for evaluating bean gum in human clinical studies to minimise virus infection/transmission," said Henry Daniell, Professor at Penn's School

of Dental Medicine.

The team is now looking to use lablab bean powder to tackle bird flu -- currently having a significant impact in North America.

"Controlling transmission of viruses continues to be a major global challenge. A broad-spectrum antiviral protein (FRIL) present in a natural food product (bean powder) to neutralise not only human flu viruses but also avian (bird) flu is a timely innovation to prevent their infection and transmission," Daniell said.

## Bird flu: Centre makes registration of poultry farms mandatory, calls for amping up surveillance

### AGENCIES

NEW DELHI

Amid rising bird flu cases in the country, the Union Government has made registration of poultry farms mandatory and urged the need for increasing surveillance to curb avian influenza.

A high-level meeting in New Delhi, chaired by Alka Upadhyaya, Secretary at the Department of Animal Husbandry and Dairying (DAHD) under the Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying set up a three-pronged strategy with stricter biosecurity, surveillance and mandatory registration of poultry farms.

The strategy "encompasses stricter biosecurity measures wherein poultry farms must enhance hygiene practices, control farm access and follow stringent biosecurity protocols to minimise the risk of infection, strengthened surveillance and mandatory registration of poultry



farms to enhance disease tracking and control", stated the ministry.

"All poultry farms must register with state animal husbandry departments within a month. The government has urged poultry industry stakeholders to ensure 100 per cent compliance with this directive," it added.

"Protecting our poultry sector is critical for food security and rural livelihoods. Strict biosecurity, scientific surveillance, and responsible industry practices are essential in our fight against bird flu," Upadhyaya said.

In addition, she stated

the need for developing a predictive modelling system for early warning and environmental surveillance which would enable proactive disease detection and response, minimising the risk of outbreaks and protecting the poultry industry.

Avian Influenza is a highly infectious viral disease affecting birds, with occasional transmission to mammals. Since its first detection in India in 2006, outbreaks have been reported annually across multiple states.

Notably, Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) has since Janu-

ary affected eight states -- Maharashtra, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Telangana, Karnataka, Bihar.

Currently, six active outbreak zones remain in Jharkhand, Telangana, and Chhattisgarh in the country.

Besides poultry, the animal and bird species affected include tiger, leopard, vulture, crow, hawk egret, pet cat, demoiselle crane, painted stork, crow, jungle cat.

Meanwhile, DAHD has permitted the use of the H9N2 (Low Pathogenic Avian Influenza) vaccine, developed by ICAR-NIHSAD, Bhopal, which is now available commercially.

A national study will evaluate the vaccine's effectiveness of LPAI vaccination. The meeting also extensively discussed the possibility of allowing the use of a vaccine against Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) in India.

## Summer Foods for Pregnant Women: Healthy Options and Foods to Avoid

### AGENCIES

NEW DELHI

As the summer season approaches, pregnant women can benefit from incorporating local and seasonal vegetables into their diet. These nutrient-rich foods provide essential vitamins, minerals, and fiber, supporting overall health and well-being during this critical period.

### Benefits of Fruits and Vegetables

Fruits and vegetables are rich in vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants that serve multiple benefits to pregnant women. They keep energy levels up, assist in healthy digestion, and contribute to glowing skin and hair. Fruits and vegetable-rich diet also prevents constipation, which is common in pregnancy.

### Summer Foods to Eat

Certain summer foods serve pregnant women quite well:

Watermelons and



melons: With high water content, these fruits keep the body hydrated.

Vitamin C-dense foods: Peaches, plums, lemons, kiwis, and guavas enhance iron absorption as well as immune function.

Apples: Fiber and iron content make them a great choice for a pregnant woman's diet.

Avocados: Rich in fiber as well as healthy fats, avocados supply well-balanced nutrition.

Bananas: Bananas ease leg cramps, something many pregnant women experience.

Mangoes: Packed with vitamins A and C, it is a healthy seasonal option.

### Staying Hydrated

Adequate hydration needs to be practiced during pregnancy. In addition to water, the following are some food items that are recommended to take:

Lassi  
Coconut water  
Buttermilk  
Lemonade

### Foods to Take Moderately

Those foods are nutritious but include too much sugar in them:

Banana  
Watermelon  
Melons  
Mangoes  
Chikoo  
Grapes

Limit eating to 2-3 per day to get away from unwanted sugar.

### Bad Foods

Foods that cannot be eaten because they pose significant risks during Pregnancy:

Smoking and drinking  
Completely steer clear of.

Sugary drinks  
Dilute/avoid thandai, shakes, and shakes.

Processed foods: Steer clear of processed snacks, sweet treats, and sodas.

Caffeine: Restrict tea and coffee intake because caffeine can be harmful to the fetus.

Raw or undercooked meat, fish, and eggs: Refrain from these foods to avoid foodborne illnesses.

Unpasteurized dairy products: Opt for pasteurized products to be safe.

Mercury-containing fish: Restrict or avoid fish with high mercury content to safeguard the growing fetus.

By choosing wisely, pregnant women can nourish their health and well-being during this pivotal time.

## Why Couples Are Avoiding More Kids: Key Factors Behind Their Family Plans

### AGENCIES

NEW DELHI

N. Chandrababu Naidu and M.K. Stalin, the Chief Ministers of Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu, have repeatedly urged women to have two or more children. Their argument is that if the population does not expand in India, birth rates will fall, leading to a crisis similar to what Japan and South Korea are experiencing.

In a generation that increasingly believes in the concept of DINK (Double Income No Kids), urging couples to consider having more than two children is a big ask. The reasons for opting for such a lifestyle range from career advancement, personal freedom, environmental concerns, and even ethical considerations.

While political leaders have put forth their aspirations, there has been no discussion from their side on the costs associated with



raising children.

With two full-blown wars underway, we live in a world full of uncertainty. Just in the past few days, U.S. President Donald Trump's 'Liberation Day' announcement to impose tariffs on most countries, along with retaliatory duties by China, has spooked the economy, prompting investment banks to sound the recession alarm.

Additionally, high inflation and the ever-increasing costs of education and healthcare have caused many couples to reconsider having children.

To understand the scenario better, let's take a look at how the Indian stock market performed

following the announcement of Trump's tariffs.

On April 4 (Friday), investors lost close to Rs 10 lakh crore in a single day due to fears of a full-blown global trade war and recession. The Sensex tumbled 930.67 points, or 1.22%, to settle at 75,364.69, while the Nifty dropped 382.2 points, or 1.64%, to 22,867.90.

Education and medical inflation are two other crucial factors that need to be considered.

According to reports, education inflation—which refers to the rise in the cost of education over time—is estimated to be around 11-12%. This means that education costs can double every six to seven years.

For example, the tuition fee at IITs (Indian Institutes of Technology) was increased by 120%, from Rs 90,000 in 2016 to Rs 2 lakh in 2017.

The rise in tuition fees is just one component of education inflation. Another burden on middle-class families is the increasing costs of study materials and extracurricular activities.

Most parents prefer private education for their children, as government schools in many parts of the country are often considered subpar. While primary and secondary education can be unaffordable for many families, higher education frequently becomes a distant dream.

Many families in India are just one medical emergency away from bankruptcy, as Zerodha co-founder Nithin Kamath warned last year. His statement is close to reality, as healthcare costs in the country are rising at an annual rate of 14%.





# Kohli's red-hot form fuels RCB hopes against table-toppers DC

**BY BD NARAYANKAR**

BENGALURU, APR 9 (UNI)

Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB) will look to consolidate their strong start to the Indian Premier League (IPL) 2025 season as they take on the in-form Delhi Capitals (DC) in a blockbuster encounter at the M Chinnaswamy Stadium here on Thursday.

The spotlight, as always, will be on Virat Kohli – the heartbeat of RCB – who has been in sublime touch this season. The former India captain has already piled up 167 runs from four matches at an impressive average of 54.66 and a strike rate of 143.85. Kohli's mastery at the Chinnaswamy is well-documented, with over 3,000 IPL runs at this venue alone, making him a formidable presence at the top of the order.

RCB currently sit third on the points table with three wins from four matches. They head into this fixture on the back of a thrilling 12-run win over Mumbai Indians at the Wankhede Stadium. Batting first, RCB posted a commanding 221/5, thanks to contributions from Kohli (67 off 42), Rajat Patidar (64 off 32), and Jitesh Sharma (40\* off 19). Their bowlers then held their nerve, with Krunal Pandya's four-wicket haul proving decisive.

The Bengaluru outfit, long criticised for its over-reliance on batting, seems



to have found balance this season. Josh Hazlewood has been a standout performer with the ball, taking 8 wickets in four games at an economy of 7.76. Yash Dayal and Krunal Pandya have chipped in with crucial breakthroughs, while Bhuvneshwar Kumar's experience has brought much-needed control with the new ball.

On the other side, Delhi have looked clinical, winning four of their five matches and occupying the top spot. In their most recent outing, they overcame Chennai Super Kings by 25 runs at Che-pauk – a venue historically tough for visiting sides. KL Rahul led the way with a composed 77 off 51 balls, while Mitchell Starc continued his wicket-taking spree, claiming his ninth scalp of the season.

DC's middle order, comprising Abishek Porel, Tristan Stubbs,

and Axar Patel, has been consistent in providing solidity and acceleration when required. Though Australian youngster Jake Fraser-McGurk has not yet fired, the flat pitch at Chinnaswamy may be just the stage he needs. With Axar leading the side and Kuldeep Yadav offering spin control in the middle overs, DC have developed into one of the most balanced units in the tournament.

The pitch at the Chinnaswamy Stadium remains a paradise for batsmen. With short boundaries and a flat surface, high scores are a common feature at the venue. Teams batting first here typically aim for totals in excess of 200, especially since four of the last six IPL games at this ground have been won by the side batting first.

RCB and DC have shared an intense rivalry over the years, but the home side

has had the upper hand recently – winning four of their last five encounters. The key to Thursday's outcome may well lie in the powerplays and death overs, with both teams boasting explosive openers and sharp pace attacks.

A win for RCB could see them challenge for the top two spots, while a DC victory would further solidify their lead and send a clear message to the rest of the league.

With Kohli in form, the fans at Chinnaswamy is expected to turn up in full voice, hoping to witness another masterclass from their talisman. For DC, the challenge will be to quieten the Bengaluru roar and extend their winning streak.

The match begins at 7:30 PM IST and promises fireworks from ball one.

# New Zealand all-rounder Bracewell makes ranking progress following Pakistan series

**AGENCIES**

DUBAI, APR 9 (UNI)

A Player of the Match performance from stand-in captain Michael Bracewell in the third ODI against Pakistan has taken the 34-year-old up two spots on the ICC Men's ODI All-Rounder rankings, as the Black Caps sealed a 3-0 series win on home soil.

Bracewell contributed 85 runs with the bat, including a superb half-century in the final ODI, and grabbed two wickets in the three ODIs.

Bracewell's 59 (40) and 1/39 (8) helped him up to fifth in the Rankings, leapfrogging compatriot Mitchell Santner (sixth) as the highest ranked Kiwi in



the category.

Walking in at 6, the all-rounder's rampant 40-ball 59-run knock, including a four and six maximums powered the Black Caps' charge as they posted 264/8 on the board from their 42 overs.

Bracewell didn't stop there as he wet on to grab the wicket of Faheem

Ashraf, ending with an economical 1-39 from his eight overs, with Ben Sears' sizzling five-wicket haul leading the home side to a 43-run win and the series sweep, an ICC report said.

His blitz with the bat has also pushed him up 12 places in the batter rankings, occupying the 89th position. while retaining

his 18th spot in the bowler rankings.

Ben Sears was the big winner for the bowlers, taking five wickets to finish with 10 for the three matches, helping him to Player of the Series accolade. He jumped 64 spots in the Bowling Rankings.

The ODI Men's Batting Rankings witnesses no major change, with Shubman Gill retaining his

No. 1 rank, followed by Pakistan's Babar Azam and India skipper Rohit Sharma.

Pakistan skipper Mohammad Rizwan climbs two places, placing him at 21 in the batting rankings after a decent outing over the course of the three ODIs.

# Maxwell fined 25 per cent of his match fees for breaking IPL code of conduct

**AGENCIES**

NEW CHANDIGARH, APR 9 (UNI)

Punjab Kings all-rounder Glenn Maxwell has been fined 25 per cent of his match fees and has also accumulated one demerit point for breaching the IPL Code of Conduct during his team's match against Chennai Super Kings at the New PCA Stadium here on Tuesday night.



Glenn Maxwell admitted to the Level 1 offence under article 2.2 (abuse of

fixtures and fittings during the Match) and accepted the Match Referee's sanction.

For Level 1 breaches of the Code of Conduct, the Match Referee's decision is final and binding, an IPL statement said.

Earlier, Punjab Kings (PBKS) secured a memorable 18-run win over Chennai Super Kings (CSK) in Match 22 of the TATA IPL 2025 here, riding on Priyansh Arya's sensational century and a composed bowling performance under pressure.

# India lose 2-1 against New Zealand in Billie Jean King Cup opener

**AGENCIES**

PUNE, APR 9 (UNI)

New Zealand has got its Billie Jean King campaign off to a great start with a 2-1 win over host nation, India in the Asia-Oceania Group 1 tournament.

While the hosts began brightly as the dynamic Shrivalli Bhamidipaty registered a resounding win in her match, it was New Zealand who had more in the tank on the day, and roared back to win the tie 2-1, here at the Mhalunge Balewadi Tennis Complex here on Tuesday.

Up first for India was Shrivalli Bhamidipaty, who was facing Aishi Das. The Indian youngster, who has been steadily going up the rankings so far, put on a power-packed performance in the national colours. In just under an hour, Shrivalli wrapped up a comprehensive win

with 6 aces and a healthy break-point conversation rate to boast off. Shrivalli won the contest 6-1, 6-1, to give India a 1-0 lead in the tie against New Zealand.

Game 2 of the India vs New Zealand tie saw Sahaja Yamalapalli take on the experienced Lulu Sun in the what was the second singles match. The young Indian was up against it as her opponent used the court and her power wisely. The match lasted for an hour and 13 minutes, with Lulu Sun making Sahaja work hard for her points. Eventually, the New Zealander won 6-3, 6-3 to level the contest at 1-1.

In the doubles game, India had the experienced duo of Ankita Raina and Prarthana Thombare squaring up against the Kiwi duo of Lulu Sun and Monique Barry.

The Indian pairing gave

it their all under the floodlights, but Lulu Sun and Monique Barry had the better of the exchanges. The Indian pairing never really looked in control of proceedings but fought valiantly. Nonetheless, New Zealand walked off the court with a straight sets win of 6-3, 6-4 in an hour and 23 minutes.

The tournament was inaugurated earlier by former Fed Cup player Radhika Tulpule-Kanitkar, Sohini Kumari, Saujanya Bavishetty, Pranjala Yadlapalli, Sai Jayalakshmi, Aarti Ponappa Natekar, Maharashtra's international tennis players Bela Phadke, Radhika Mandke, and Sheetal Kannamwar Iyer.

On this occasion, Maharashtra international tennis players Rutuja Bhosale, Radhika Godbole, Bela Phadke, Vaishnavi Adkar, and Sheetal Kan-

namwar Iyer were also felicitated. The awards were presented by MSLTA Chairman Bharat Oza, Tournament Director and MSLTA Hon Secretary Sunder Iyer, Treasurer Sudhir Bhivapurkar, Joint Secretaries Ravij Desai and Sheetal Bhosale, and Chief Executive Officer Manoj Vaidya.

Prior to this, Tournament Director Sunder Iyer delivered the welcome address. The opening ceremony that marked the official inauguration of the tournament, witnessed players marching onto the court bearing their respective national flags. It was a picturesque moment of celebration at

Centre Court as the teams got together ahead of the tournament.

India will take on Thailand in their second match of the Billie Jean King Cup on Wednesday.

# Receiving India cap made me cry all evening: Padikkal

**AGENCIES**

BENGALURU, APR 9 (UNI)

As Royal Challengers Bengaluru gear up to face Delhi Capitals at home, top-order batsman Devdutt Padikkal has offered a rare glimpse into the emotional weight of his cricketing journey, recalling his Test debut for India as a moment of overwhelming fulfillment.

"I went back to my room

on the day of the game where I got my cap and cried for the rest of the evening." These were the poignant words of Devdutt Padikkal.

In a deeply personal and moving episode of RCB Bold Diaries ahead of RCB's home clash against Delhi, Padikkal opened up on his battles, growth, and dreams, laying bare the emotional weight of donning India's Test whites.

"When you go to bed

every night as a kid watching cricket, taking in Test Cricket and looking at it as something that you want to achieve, then to wake up one day and know that you are doing what you dreamt of every single day going to bed, that's something that is so special to have, right? Playing Test Cricket has always been my ultimate goal," he said.

"That moment of receiv-

ing that cap is something that I don't think I will ever feel again, because that is such a special moment. It happens once in your life," he added. Padikkal, who returned to RCB this season, also reflected on his early days as a die-hard fan of the franchise, his admiration for Karnataka's cricketing legends, and the challenges of staying resilient through personal health setbacks.

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