



Terrorism Free J&K is Our Resolve : LG Manoj Sinha

Attends Passing Out Parade of the BRTC 16th Batch of J&K Police at PTS Manigam, Ganderbal

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

GANDERBAL, APRIL 18: Lieutenant Governor Shri Manoj Sinha today attended the Passing Out Parade of the 16th Batch of Basic Recruit Training Course (BRTC) of J&K Police Constables at Manigam Police Training School, Ganderbal.

A total of 438 recruits, including 86 women, completed their rigorous training, today



at PTS Manigam. Among them, 211 brave constables have previously served as SPOs.

Paying tributes to the valour of J&K Police, the Lieutenant Governor exhorted the young recruits to work with diligence and high professionalism to protect the motherland.

"The nation is grateful to J&K Police for the invaluable sacrifices they have made. Citizens can live peacefully and work

TURN ON.....PAGE 02

DGP Nalin Prabhat thanks MHA, Centre for support

Says efforts on to strengthen counter terrorism grid, tackle cyber criminals

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

GANDERBAL, APR 18

Asserting that efforts are on to strengthen the counter terrorism grid and tackle the cyber criminals in Jammu and Kashmir, Director General of Police (DGP) Nalin Prabhat on Friday thanked the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) and the Centre for their support.

Addressing a passing out parade here in Central Kashmir, DGP Prabhat, according



to the news agency—said, "The counter terrorism grid has been strengthened and new technologies are being developed to identify and nail

the cyber criminals."

The DGP said, "We are thankful to Centre and Ministry of Home Affairs for providing us with all the support and help.

"I feel proud addressing the new recruits. The J&K policemen are being trained to the core along with physical fitness, they are being equipped with new skills and techniques to fight terror and other crimes."

TURN ON.....PAGE 02

Rains lash Valley, hail storm wreaks havoc in South Kashmir

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, APR 18: Rains lashed different parts of Valley on Friday, while the hail storm wreaked havoc in South Kashmir.

Amidst two-day yellow and orange alert issued by the Met Department the parts of Kashmir including Srinagar, the summer capital of Jammu and Kashmir were lashed by the rainfall from late afternoon.

Reports of hailstorms in South Kashmir areas in Shopian district were also received, causing extensive losses to the orchardists and fruit growers. According to the news agency—, the next

TURN ON.....PAGE 02



Active Western Disturbance to Bring Heavy Rain, Snowfall in J&K till April 20

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, APR 18: Jammu and Kashmir is set to experience another spell of wet weather as an active Western Disturbance (WD) is likely to affect the region starting this afternoon, with its impact expected to last until April 20. According to the Meteorological

TURN ON.....PAGE 02

J&K Hajj pilgrims plummet 70% in two years as costs soar

Only 3,624 expected to embark on holy pilgrimage this year

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, APR: The number of pilgrims heading for Hajj from Jammu and Kashmir has seen a sharp decline in recent years, with official figures revealing a 70 per cent drop over the past two years compared to 2023.

Only 3,624 pilgrims from the region are set to embark on the sacred journey in 2025, down from 7,008 pilgrims who

performed the pilgrimage last year.

Officials, speaking to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), cite a combination of factors behind the decline, including the rising cost of travel after the removal of government subsidies, the absence of foreign airlines in this year's Hajj operations, and increasing concerns about extreme summer temperatures in

TURN ON.....PAGE 02

Prominent Shia scholar Aga Syed Baqir laid to rest

Dr. Farooq, Omar Abdullah condole demise of Allama Aga Syed Mohammad Baqir

■ HT NEWS NETWORK



BUDGAM, APR 18: Thousands gathered in Budgam on Friday to attend the last rites of the renowned Shia cleric and scholar Allama Aga Syed Mohammad Baqir Al-Moosavi Al-Najfi, who passed away late Thursday night.

The Namaz-e-Janaza was held at his ancestral shrine, Astana-e-Aliya after the culmination of congregational Friday prayers.

The funeral procession as per the news agency—, witnessed participation from Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah, Member of Parliament Syed Aga Ruhullah, Advisor to Chief Minister, Nasir Aslam Wani and other prominent political and religious figures, reflecting the wide-reaching influence of the late

TURN ON.....PAGE 02

Holding elections alone not enough, restore statehood to J&K: AICC Gen Secy

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, APR 18 All India Congress Committee (AICC) General Secretary and Incharge J&K Affairs, Dr Sayeed Naseer Hussain on Friday said holding elections in Jammu and Kashmir without restoring full statehood would be a half measure and that the elected government should have real decision-making powers.

Addressing a press conference in Jammu, Dr Hussain, who was joined by JKPC president Tariq Hameed Karra and senior leader G A Mir, said the Congress Party had clearly included the demand for statehood in its political resolution.

"Elections alone aren't enough. The elected

TURN ON.....PAGE 02

'Honest Policing, No Hanky-Panky' Police can err too – keep us in check: SSP Baramulla to media

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

Srinagar, Apr 18: Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Baramulla, Gurinderpal Singh, emphasised a zero-tolerance policy against militancy, crimes against women, drug-related offenses and law & order violations, while expressing openness to corrective measures within the police force.

"No form of misconduct is acceptable— not even 0.1%," SSP Singh said, adding that he has issued strict directives to his subordinate officers to ensure that there is no "hanky-panky" from the police side. During an interaction with the media, the SSP advocated for a

TURN ON.....PAGE 02

'BOOK BOMBHELL: THE CHIEF MINISTER AND THE SPY'

Dr Saheb is a legend; story is about tallest leader of Kashmir, one of India's tallest: Dulat

'History will judge Dr Farooq greater than Sheikh Abdullah'

■ HT NEWS NETWORK/AGENCIES

SRINAGAR, APR 18: The launch of former RAW chief Amar Singh Dulat's explosive memoir "The Chief Minister and The Spy" in New Delhi on Friday has reignited political tensions, with the book making startling claims about National Conference (NC) patriarch Dr. Farooq Abdullah's role during the abrogation of Article 370.



Addressing the audience during the

book launch, Dulat dismissed the brewing controversy: "Dr. Saheb [Farooq Abdullah] is not here, I don't know how this started, but few have read the book. Someone picked one paragraph from page 208 and twisted it – English is a difficult language," Dulat said in his speech, as per the news agency—"This book isn't about that paragraph. Read what comes before and after. The story is about a great man

TURN ON.....PAGE 02

Nearly 400 posts vacant in SMHS Hospital

'Despite severe staff shortage, around 17,000 surgeries performed in a year'

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, APR 18: Despite being one of the largest and busiest tertiary care hospitals in Jammu and Kashmir, the Shri Maharaja Hari Singh (SMHS) Hospital in Srinagar is grappling with a severe staff crunch, with nearly 400 posts currently lying vacant.

This information, accessed by the news agency—, was disclosed through a Right to Information (RTI) file obtained by RTI activist M M



Shuja. According to the details, the vacancies span various departments and include critical positions such as doctors, nurses, paramedics and

technicians. This shortfall has added pressure on the existing staff, who are managing a massive patient load under challenging circumstances.

The vacancies include the post of Deputy Medical superintendent, Assistant surgeons, senior grade nurses, junior grade nurses, pharmacists, ECG assistants, laboratory assistant, radiotherapy assistant, drivers, laundry operators, multi-tasking staff, cook sweepers and others.

TURN ON.....PAGE 02

CS discusses plans with stakeholders to boost tourism in Jammu Deptt unveils several circuits for promotion across J&K

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU, APRIL 18: In a significant move towards revitalising tourism in Jammu division, the Department of Tourism today presented a strategic and action oriented roadmap to the Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo, regarding promotion of tourism across the region, during an exclusive meeting held here in this regard.

Besides Commissioner Secretary, Tourism; Secretary, PWD and Divisional Commissioner, Jammu, the meeting was attended by CEO, Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board; Deputy Commissioners Jammu, Reasi and Udhampur; Director Tourism, Jammu and other concerned officers of the



department. In addition, the meeting was also attended by the major tourism and

travel operators including hoteliers and traders. Dulloo impressed on the depart-

ment to redouble efforts towards vigorous promotion and publicity of the tourism circuits. He enjoined upon them to be proactive across all the social media platforms, using the services of influencers there to reach out to the masses. He asked for starting rafting and paragliding at some of the places across the region, taking utmost care of the safety parameters. He also asked for roping in the professionals in this tourism trade activity to train the youth.

The Chief Secretary asked the department to frame the Homestay policy as soon as possible with other guidelines for registration of BnB enterprises. He also directed for devising the loan product for develop-

TURN ON.....PAGE 02

Labourer Killed, Two Critically Injured in Construction Site Mishap in Shopian

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

SHOPIAN, APRIL 18, : One labourer was killed and two others critically injured in a construction site accident in the Pandit Colony area of Allowpora in south Kashmir's Shopian district on Friday.

The incident occurred when a cement mixture trolley, laden with construction materials, fell from the upper floor of a newly built double-storey structure. The sudden collapse of the trolley during ongoing construction work led to the fatal mishap.

All three labourers involved in the accident were residents of Kaprin, Kokernag. While the

TURN ON.....PAGE 02



CONTINUE FROM FRONT PAGE.....

LG

freely because they know that our police force is standing firm in protecting the lives and combating terrorism and crime.

The exemplary courage of J&K Police and their supreme heroism reassures the people that UT is in safe hands. Today J&K Police force is admired across the country for its professionalism, sustained grit and determination," the Lieutenant Governor said.

The Lieutenant Governor said J&K Police, Army and CAPFs are determined to crush terror. "In the last few years, J&K Police Force, Army and CAPFs have succeeded in crushing terrorism in the Kashmir Valley, however, terrorist incidents have increased in Jammu division, which is a matter of concern. Our resolve is to make both Jammu and Kashmir divisions terrorism-free," the Lieutenant Governor said.

The Lieutenant Governor emphasised on emerging technologies reshaping policing and directed J&K Police Force to adapt to Cutting-edge technology and advanced tools and deploy them to enhance their operational effectiveness.

"We need a future-ready police force to effectively combat evolving terror and organised crime threats. In view of the rapid changes taking place due to technology, our approach should be on Data-Centric policing to effectively tackle challenges, analyse crime trends and predict the crime patterns and make necessary changes in the investigation," the Lieutenant Governor said.

Extending his best wishes to the passing out Trainees, the Lieutenant Governor said, the skills, knowledge, and values they have gained during their training will provide a solid foundation and enhance their capabilities to discharge their duty with utmost sensitivity. "I am confident that apart from professional tradecraft, the life values that new recruits have imbibed at the Manigam Police Training School and ideals like courage, valour, patience, self-sacrifice and discipline they have inculcated in life will enable them to face all kinds of challenges in the future," he said. Shri Zubair Ahmad Khan, Principal PITS Manigam briefed about the program and various activities conducted during the Training course.

The Lieutenant Governor took the ceremonial Salute and inspected the parade. He also felicitated the new recruits who had excelled during their training.

An oath was administered to the new recruits for performing their duties with dedication and honesty.

Shri Nalin Prabhat, DGP; Shri SJM Gillani, Chairman & MD Police Housing Corporation; Shri Anand Jain, ADGP Armed; Dr Mandeep K. Bhandari, Principal Secretary to Lieutenant Governor; Shri Vijay Kumar Bidhuri, Divisional Commissioner Kashmir; Shri Vidhi Kumar Birdi, IGP Kashmir; Shri Jatin Kishore, Deputy Commissioner Ganderbal; senior officials of Police, Security Forces and civil administration and family members of the passing out Trainees were present.

DIG

The DGP said, "J&K Police are committed to stand by with the families of martyrs. They are being provided with all the possible assistance."

Congratulating the passouts, the DGP as per KNO, said, "You have become the part of one of the best police forces in the country. I see discipline and resolve in you and wish you all the best for your future."

It may be recalled that during Union Home Minister Amit Shah's recent visit to Jammu and Kashmir, DGP Prabhat had thanked him for his support and "zero-terror" strategy.

He had said the successful implementation of Shah's decisions like the "zero terror" plan coupled with his support have made the J-K Police strategically a very strong force.

He had thanked the Union Home Minister for meeting the families of the martyrs and personally handing over appointment orders to them. "Our force will not rest till terrorism is completely wiped out of J-K," he said.

The DGP had also praised Shah for his support in conducting general warfare special training, camp security and area domination—

HAJJ

Saudi Arabia.

In addition to the pilgrims from J&K, 242 individuals from Ladakh are also scheduled to travel for Hajj this year. Flights from Srinagar International Airport are expected to begin on May 4 and will continue until May 15.

A total of 13 flights are planned from Srinagar, while one additional flight carrying 440 pilgrims will depart from New Delhi, according to the officials.

Looking at the recent trend, the decline is part of a broader pattern. In 2023, 12,079 pilgrims from Jammu and Kashmir undertook the pilgrimage.

That number fell by 42 per cent in 2024, and this year, it has dropped further by around 48 per cent. Overall, the region has

witnessed a 70 per cent decrease in Hajj pilgrims over just two years.

In 2022, the combined figure for J&K and Ladakh stood at around 6,000 pilgrims, marking a relatively stable period following the COVID-19 pandemic, during which Hajj was suspended in 2020 and 2021.

The surge in 2023 was short-lived, and the sharp fall in the subsequent years reflects both financial and logistical hurdles that prospective pilgrims are facing.

While the official Hajj quota for J&K in 2024 was 8,200, only 8,147 applications were received, and 7,008 individuals ultimately completed the journey.

The officials further said that apart from the government-organised arrangements, approximately 3,000 pilgrims from J&K opt for private travel operators each year a trend that has held steady since 2015.

"With the soaring cost of travel and the absence of foreign airlines, the number of pilgrims from J&K has been considerably reduced. Added to that, the fears over extreme temperatures in Saudi Arabia have also deterred many from making the pilgrimage this year," another official said—

RAINS

three days upto April 21 would likely witness more rains and snow across Jammu and Kashmir as the weatherman has stated that an active Western Disturbance would likely affect the region, bringing widespread light to moderate rain in plains and snow in the higher reaches.

The MeT has issued a warning of heavy rain, snowfall, thunderstorms, and strong winds across Jammu and Kashmir from April 18 to April 20, with peak intensity expected between the night of April 18 and late night of April 19.

The Pir Panjal range in Jammu and upper regions of Kashmir—especially Anantnag-Pahalgam, Kulgam, Sinthan Pass, Shopian, Pir Ki Gali, Sonamarg-Zojila, Bandipora-Razdan Pass, Gulmarg, and Kupwara-Sadhma Pass—are expected to receive heavy precipitation, reads the advisory.

The advisory warns of strong winds reaching 40–50 kmph, gusting up to 60–70 kmph, along with the possibility of hailstorms and lightning. The adverse weather may cause significant disruption to surface transport, particularly on the Jammu-Srinagar and Srinagar-Leh National Highways and other major roads in hilly areas.

The MeT has also cautioned about risks of landslides, mudslides, shooting stones, and a rise in water levels in rivers and streams. Waterlogging in low-lying areas is also expected. Farmers have been advised to suspend all agricultural operations from April 18 until the afternoon of April 21—

WEATHER

Department, moderate to heavy rain and thunderstorms are likely across the Union Territory from late afternoon or evening today, with the peak intensity of the system forecast for April 19.

Officials said that some areas may witness heavy rainfall accompanied by gusty winds and hailstorms, which could disrupt normal life. The higher reaches of Kashmir, particularly on April 19, are expected to receive light to moderate snowfall, adding to the weather woes.

The MeT department has also advised farmers to take precautionary measures and suspend all farm-related activities, including spraying, for the next three days to avoid any potential losses due to the adverse weather conditions.

"An active Western Disturbance will affect J&K from today afternoon. Under its influence, widespread rain and thunderstorms are expected across the region, with the possibility of heavy rainfall at isolated places. Farmers are advised to suspend spraying and other farm operations until the weather improves," a MeT official said.

AICC

government should have real powers. The idea is not just about elections but about restoring the rights of the people of Jammu and Kashmir," Dr Hussain said, as reported by the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO).

He hit out at the BJP-led central government, accusing it of weakening democratic institutions. "J&K deserved a fully empowered government which functions within the spirit of the federal structure," he said.

The AICC leader raised questions about the process by which several bills were passed in Parliament, despite strong opposition and concerns about their constitutionality. "The same questions raised in the Joint Parliamentary Committee and Parliament are now being asked by the Supreme Court, and the government still doesn't have answers," he said.

Dr Hussain criticised the Centre for what he called "pressurising institutions" and "targeting democratic structures".

Referring to several recent developments, the Congress leader said, "We are seeing repeated patterns where institutions like the CBI, ED, and even the Election Commission are being undermined."—

SMSH

Details reveal that four drug counters are functioning in the hospital, including two Amrit drug counters, hospital drug counter and Janaushadhi drug counter.

A total of 9,86,174 patients were treated in OPD in the year 2023–24 while around 108000 were treated in IPD and in 2024, 825070 were treated in OPD and 93,000 were treated in IPD, according to details, adding that 3521 deaths were reported in the hospital in 2023 and 2214 were reported in 2024.

Around 21,000 surgeries were performed at the hospital in 2023 and 17,000 in 2024.

A senior official at the hospital said that despite the human resource shortage, the hospital has managed to perform nearly 17,000 surgeries in the past one year.

"From general surgeries to specialised procedures, our doctors and staff have done remarkable work. But we are stretched thin, and the unfilled posts are affecting overall efficiency and patient care," he said.

The hospital caters to thousands of patients daily, not just from Srinagar but from across the Kashmir Valley, said a doctor wishing anonymity.

"When such a large number of posts remain unfilled in a major hospital, it can compromise patient care, delay procedures, and lead to burnout among staff," the doctor said.

Patients and attendants also said that a shortage of staff often leads to delays in diagnostics, consultations and follow-ups—

SSP BARAMULLA

collaborative relationship between the police, society and journalists to minimise errors in judgment. "If you, the journalists or the public, come to us and point out any lapse or potential error—even if it originates from the police—we will ensure that corrective measures are taken," he assured.

Focusing on investigations related to militancy, the police officer stressed the necessity for precision. "We cannot afford mistakes in militancy-related cases. While it is imperative to bring the guilty to justice, no innocent individual should be wrongly implicated," he said.

The top cop insisted that any misconduct involving militancy, crimes against women, drug offences, and law & order issues would not be tolerated. "The facts must be recorded truthfully and substantiated in court. Not a single innocent should be punished; only those who truly deserve legal consequences should face them," he said.

SSP Singh further articulated the philosophy of the criminal justice system, saying it must operate in a manner that allows even if a thousand criminals evade justice, not one innocent person should be falsely accused. "Our goal is clear: those who deserve punishment should receive it," he added—

LABOUR

identity of the deceased worker was not immediately confirmed, the two injured—identified as Abdul Rashid Bumla and Farooq Ahmad Bumla—were rushed to the District Hospital Pulwama. Due to the severity of their injuries, both were later referred to SMHS Hospital in Srinagar for advanced treatment.

Authorities have launched an investigation into the circumstances surrounding the accident. Police said they have taken cognizance of the matter and are looking into possible safety lapses at the site. [KNT]

CS

ment of Home—stays in the region as per the past directions.

On the occasion, Commissioner Secretary, Tourism, Yasha Mudgal, gave a presentation detailing the multifaceted approach focused on thematic circuits, adventure tourism, heritage experiences, infrastructural upgrades and promotion of offbeat destinations, aimed at making Jammu a year-round diversified tourist destination.

She threw light on five major tourist circuits envisaged by the department to make tourism a major activity across Jammu region. These circuits were discussed to ensure multi-day stay of tourists in the region based upon their choice and interests.

Several itineraries were proposed in these circuits based on thematic, heritage, adventure, pilgrim and other offbeat destinations to prolong the stay of tourists here besides encompassing the tourism spots across adjacent districts.

The identified major tourist circuits that were unveiled during the meeting included the Katra–Shivkhori Circuit, emphasizing on pilgrimage, adventure and border tourism. This circuit integrates spiritual hotspots like Shri Mata Vaishno Devi, Shivkhori and heritage sites such as Krimchi Temples and Raghunath Temple, Ranbireswar besides nature trails of Mantalai and Patnitop and border tourism (Suchetgarh). Chenab Valley Circuit covering Bhaderwah, Kishtwar and Doda and white water rafting at Shibnote, trekking trails and valley tourism (LalDraman, Warwan). This route blends adventure, nat-

HT - NEWS

ural beauty and cultural richness with activities like rafting at Baradari and scenic treks through Warwan Valley. The itineraries taps into Bhaderwah, a region with growing tourist footfall and the newly accessible Tatapani, now linked via Sanagldan Railway Station.

Samba–Kathua Circuit focused on religious, heritage and water-based tourism, highlighting Basohli, Ranjit Sagar Lake and Sarthal besides the pilgrim sites of Budha Amarnath and Gurudwara Nangali Sahib.

Similarly, Pir Panjal Circuit encompassing Rajouri and Poonch, this circuit offers fort tourism, cultural immersion and alpine treks, promoting sites like Peer Ki Gali and Budha Amarnath Ji.

Moreover, a bundle of adventure and off-beat trails to several alpine lakes like Chandann Sar, Nandan Sar, Katoria Sar were proposed. Besides, trekking routes and unexplored valleys were mapped with plans for eco-tourism and sustainable adventure tourism in collaboration with mountaineering institutes.

Additionally, a Rs 4 crore project was proposed under CAPEX 2025–26 to develop a full-fledged paragliding facility, complete with lounges, cafes, sunset points and public utilities at Aithem

With respect to the iconic Chenab Railway Bridge, it was given out that a Tourist Information Centre (TIC) and branding initiatives are underway at the world's highest railway bridge site, with audio-visual content to engage the visitors and enhance their experience on visiting this engineering marvel.

As far as promotion of Border Tourism is concerned, a major upgrade of the Suchetgarh border site including a pavilion expansion of the capacity of around 3000 persons and establishment of a museum was also revealed to make it a round the year tourism destination.

Regarding the Baradari Rafting Centre, Reasi, it was added that the plan contains institutionalisation of the rafting tourism. This will include forming of rafting associations, fixing rates and reviving UT/National-level competitions there to promote this aspect of the tourism.

With respect to the marketing and promotional strategies, a plethora of material in the shape of high-quality brochures, thematic leaflets and district-specific collaterals were released to bolster visibility across the country.

These destinations were also promoted through participation in leading Travel Marts like SATTE (Delhi) and OTM (Mumbai), the meeting was informed. It was said that hosting of PGTI Golf Tournaments at Jammu Tawi Golf Course for national and international exposure are now a regular feature thereby showing the steady success of the department in showcasing Jammu as an independent tourism place on the map.

The stakeholders, present on the occasion, also gave their inputs and views for making this strategy successful. They praised the department for its efforts and showed enthusiasm in selling these packages and circuits with the active support of the department in the season ahead.

DR FAROOQ –

the tallest leader of Kashmir, one of India's tallest. He's among the world's tallest leaders. Dr. Saheb is a legend. That won't change," he said.

When pressed about allegations that Abdullah tacitly supported the Article 370 revocation, Dulat was unequivocal. I really don't know what transpired. I did ask Dr. Sahab and Omar as well, and they said, "We were told nothing at all. While writing this book, I again asked Dr. Sahab, and he said, ask Omar, but... The response I got from both father and son was that they had been told nothing. So, it's got nothing to do with what people are saying today. It's a lot of rubbish—that's all I can say."

As per KNO, Dulat added further that no one in Kashmir supported the 370 repeal. "There was not a single Kashmiri anywhere who supported the abrogation. And there were a lot of Indians who spoke against it—I did. I wrote against it, spoke against it, and so did many others. I remember our former Union Home Minister, Chidambaram, speaking with a lot of passion in Parliament, referring to it as a "monumental blunder." So, there's no question of any Kashmiri supporting it. Now, of course, as time has passed and the Supreme Court says everything is okay, Kashmiris probably feel that 370 is not coming back—though they're still willing to fight for it."

He recounted a poignant February 2020 meeting: "What transpired between Dr. Farooq and me was that he couldn't fathom why, after being with India all his life—his family, his father, everybody—they had to lock him up. That was the crux of it. So he said, "If they had to do this, why couldn't they take us into confidence?" That's the crux of the whole thing."

Dulat blamed media sensationalism, claiming that The Hindustan Times story wrecked everything. "As I said, I don't know who started this deliberately—somebody did, obviously—because that first story in Hindustan Times wrecked everything. It rattled everybody, and I think it probably shook Dr. Saheb too. I don't know what frame

of mind he's in, but obviously, it disturbed him. I can't say who is responsible. It's very difficult to say, and I don't want to name names here because I think this is a happy occasion and ought to end happily. But yes, somebody was responsible—I don't know who."

The ex-spy revealed how Kashmir became his life's work. "In 1988, I thought it was a holiday posting. By 1989, bombs were exploding. That winter, everyone fled—we lost four officers in weeks. Jagmohan had me removed, calling me 'Farooq's man.' But Kashmir never left me."

He named three figures, who targeted him: "Jagmohan, Mufti Sayeed, and Arun Nehru—they wanted me out."

Reflecting on the insurgency's origins, Dulat, as per KNO, said: "We wasted a chance in 1989–90. The JKLF boys didn't understand 'azadi.' Pakistan's ISI exploited them—General Durrani told me even they were surprised by the militancy's spread."

On the Pandit exodus, Dulat said that then governor Jagmohan should not be blamed for the exodus of pandits however he was happy about it. "I was there when it started. A prominent Kashmiri Pandit (quoted in my book) came to me desperately, saying, "We have to go." There was so much fear—especially after Judge Ganju was killed on Hari Singh High Street. Nobody came for hours to retrieve his body—he bled to death. A lot of blame is put on Jagmohan—but I don't think he was responsible for the exodus. He was happy with it because if Pandits stayed, more would've been killed, and he'd have gotten the blame."

Recounting the 1999 Kandahar hijacking, Dulat revealed during the book launch that Farooq Abdullah [then Chief Minister] theatrically threatened to resign when Delhi demanded prisoner releases. "We went to Governor Saxena at 10PM—he served Black Label and said to Dr Farooq, 'You're a big man, don't resign.' Farooq in a stunning historical assessment, Dulat, as per KNO, declared that history will judge Farooq Abdullah greater than his father. "He is a man with very strong and good political instincts, but he's also a very brave man to have endured all that he has. As a politician, I think he's one of the best. I've written in the book that he's the Sultan of Politics. When history is written, Dr. Farooq will emerge even greater than Sheikh Abullah. Now, I'm not saying spending 12 or 13 years in jail is easy, but the Sheikh had Mahatma Gandhi on his side. He had Nehru on his side. You know the story—when the Sheikh was finally released, he came to Delhi and stayed as the Prime Minister's guest. Would that happen today?"—

Late

the late scholar.

Allama Baqir, the senior-most member of the influential Aga family, was laid to rest amid a sea of mourners, with emotional scenes as followers and students paid their final respects.

Shops and businesses in parts of Budgam remained closed as a mark of mourning and local Masjids reverberated with prayers in his memory.

A scholar of deep insight, Allama Baqir studied at the esteemed Howza Ilmia seminary in Najaf before returning to Kashmir in 1982 to carry forward the spiritual legacy of his forefathers.

Known for his mastery of Arabic, Persian, and Kashmiri, he also contributed extensively as a poet, writer, and preacher.

Condolences continued to pour in from across the region.

IN THE COURT OF EXECUTIVE MAGISTRATE 1ST CLASS SOPORE

In the case of **BILAL AHMAD NAJAR.S/O SONAULLAH NAJAR R/O PALPORA QAZIABAD-Versus-C,E,O Municipal Council Sopore/B D O Sangrama/B D O Sopore (Registrar of Birth and death**

Notice To Public At Large

Where's the Above titled case is under process in this court seeking direction therein to the non applicant u/S 13(3) of the registration of Birth & Deaths Act 1969 for registration of Birth event of the applicant/applicant's daughter's namely NOOR UI NISA D/O BILAL AHMAD Najar as 10/08/2021 at Sopore nursing home Wherea's through The Medium of this proclamation the public at large is informed that in case any one has any objection for issuance of direction with respect to the registration of aforementioned Birth event, he/she shall file the same before this court in person or through Counsel within 7 days from the date of the publications of this proclamation. If the date fixed is declared holiday, the matter will be taken on the next working day.

Executive Magistrate 1st class sopore





Kashmir's apple farmers continue to choose high-density orchards for increased returns

Transformative shift supported by govt initiatives

HT News Network

Srinagar, Apr 18: In a significant shift in horticultural practices, a growing number of apple farmers in Kashmir are turning to high-density apple orchards to boost productivity and secure quicker returns. As reported by the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), with increasing support from the Horticulture Department and rising awareness among growers, traditional apple orchards across the valley are being grafted with high-yielding, high-density apple varieties. Officials said that hundreds of kanals of land under conventional apple trees have already been converted. "These high-density orchards require less space, bear fruit within 2 to 3 years, and yield significantly more produce per kanal compared to traditional trees," they said. "Farmers are realising that high-density orchards are more profitable in the long run. The government is also providing technical assistance, training, and subsidised plant material to facilitate this transformation," a senior horticulture officer told KNO.



Ghulam Mohammad, a fruit grower from Shopian, shared his experience: "We used to wait 10–15 years to get good produce from our traditional trees. Now, within just 2 to 3 years, I'm seeing returns from the high-density varieties. It's a game-changer." Experts believe the shift is largely driven by market demand for uniform and high-quality fruit, better disease management and efficient space utilisation. However, the transformation isn't with-

out its challenges. Proper irrigation, timely pruning, and specialised technical knowledge remain essential for success. First introduced in Kashmir a few years ago, the high-density plantation model is now gaining rapid traction in districts like Shopian, Baramulla and Anantnag. With climate change affecting traditional farming methods, these adaptive strategies are increasingly viewed as the future of Kashmir's horticulture. Officials estimate that if the current pace

continues, a majority of commercial apple orchards in Kashmir could adopt the high-density model within the next five years. However, they also caution that high-density orchards have a shorter lifespan, require higher initial investment, are more vulnerable to pests and diseases, depend heavily on dwarf rootstock and skilled management and cannot be stored as long as traditional varieties in cold storage. Despite these limitations, the response to the government's High-Density Plantation (HADP) initiative has been overwhelming. Officials said the proposed target under the High-Density Plantation (HADP) for the next financial year in Kashmir is 808.5 hectares, while the applications received so far total over 6,240 hectares. In the Jammu division, the target for the HADP for the next financial year is 535 hectares, while applications received are for 885 hectares. In Pulwama district, which has a target of 90 hectares, applications have been received for 1,855 hectares. In Anantnag, where the target is 70 hectares, applications received a total of 1,473 hectares.

GMC Srinagr hosts Live Operative Workshop with JAKAS

HT News Network

Srinagar, Apr 18: The PG Department of Minimal Access and General Surgery, GMC Srinagar, in collaboration with JAKASI, successfully hosted a Live Operative Workshop on Advanced Laparoscopic GI and Gynae Oncosurgery on Friday at the GMC Auditorium. The event witnessed the participation of surgical faculty and postgraduates from across the region, a statement issued to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) reads. The highlight of the workshop was the presence of Dr. Shailesh Puntambekar, an internationally renowned laparoscopic oncosurgeon from Galaxy Hospital, Pune. Dr. Puntambekar showcased his unparalleled expertise by performing Laparoscopic Whipple's Procedure, Lap LAR for Carcinoma Rectum, and Lap Wertheim's Hysterectomy for Carcinoma Endometrium, setting a benchmark in surgical excellence and innovation. Inaugural ceremony was held under the patronage of Prof Dr Iffat Hassan Shah, Principal and Dean GMC Srinagar, with Dr Puntambekar as the Guest of Honor, Prof Ruksana Najeeb - Principal GMC Anantnag & Prof. Dr Fazl ul Qadir Parray - Principal SKIMS Medical College as special guests. Special appreciation is extended to Prof. (Dr.) Iqbal Saleem Mir, HOD Surgery and Organising Chairman, whose visionary leadership and tireless efforts were instrumental in the success of this academic event. His commitment to advancing surgical education in the region continues to inspire generations of surgeons. The workshop also offered 4 CME credit hours and reaffirmed GMC Srinagar's dedication.

Dy CM reviews progress on water supply projects in Nowshera

HT News Network

Jammu, Apr 18: Aiming smooth water supply in Nowshera Constituency in ensuing summer season, Deputy Chief Minister, Surinder Kumar Choudhary, who is also the local MLA, Friday reviewed functioning of Jal Shakti department besides assessing progress on works being executed under JJM, NABARD and UT Capex during a meeting held here in this regard. The Chief Engineer, Jal Shakti, apprised that there are total 70 schemes functioning in the constituency including 51 under Jal Jeevan Mission, 18 under Languishing/UT Capex and one under NABARD to overcome the water crisis in Nowshera. It was also informed in the meeting, that out of 18 schemes under UT capex, 11 have been completed



while 7 are under process. Similarly, 75 percent of the work has been completed on the only scheme under NABARD. Regarding the financial status of 51 schemes under JJM, the concerned official apprised that out of Rs 358.59 crore estimated cost an expenditure of Rs. 212.77 crore has been achieved on procurement of material and development of infrastructure. He said that remaining work on most of the schemes shall be completed soon and will be

commissioned next month. It was further informed that there are three schemes of irrigation sector, one of flood control under NABARD in which two DPRs of Irrigation sector are under process and one DPR of Flood control has been submitted. The Dy CM, after taking scheme wise review of all sectors, instructed the officers to strictly adhere to quality parameters and complete the projects within the stipulated time frame. Choudhary emphasized

that the only priority should be maintaining regular supply of water in view of the ensuing summer season. He asked all the departments including Jal Shakti, Irrigation and Flood Control, JPDCL, Ground Water to work in synergy providing maximum relief to the people. The Deputy Chief Minister asked to expedite the pace of progress on various developmental initiatives, focusing on timely commissioning of schemes. He also stressed upon them to ensure that the public service deliverance mechanism shall be speeded up so that the people do not face any inconvenience. He said that measures are underway to further improve and upgrade the existing infrastructure of PHE and PDD departments. Later, the Deputy Chief Minister chaired a meeting to review the legal cases.

Hakeem Yaseen Mourns Loss of Renowned Shia Scholar Allama Agha Syed Baqir Al-Moosavi

HT News Network

Srinagar, Apr 18: Hakeem Muhammad Yaseen, President of the Jammu and Kashmir Peoples Democratic Front (PDF) and former minister, has expressed deep sorrow over the passing of prominent Shia cleric and scholar, *Allama Agha Syed Mohammad Baqir Al-Moosavi. In his condolence message, Hakeem Yaseen hailed the late scholar as a towering figure of faith, intellect, and service. "Allama Al-Moosavi's unparalleled contributions to religious discourse, interfaith harmony, and public welfare in Jammu and Kashmir have left an indelible mark," he said. Hakeem noted that the revered cleric was a beacon of unity whose teachings inspired generations across communities. "His demise is a monumental loss not just to the Shia community but to all who value peace, wisdom, and spiritual integrity." Offering his heartfelt condolences to the bereaved family, followers, and admirers, Hakeem Yaseen prayed for eternal peace to the departed soul and strength to the mourners to bear the irreparable loss.

Mumbai Tourist Dies After Collapsing in Srinagar Hotel

HT News Network

Srinagar, Apr 18, : A 75-year-old tourist from Mumbai passed away after falling unconscious at a private hotel in the Dalgate area of Srinagar late Thursday evening. Officials said that the deceased, identified as Sanjeev Jaywant Nabar of Dahisar West, Mumbai, suddenly collapsed inside his hotel room. He was rushed to a nearby hospital for treatment, but doctors pronounced him dead on arrival. Authorities have taken up necessary medico-legal formalities.

Altaf Bukhari Condoles Demise of Allama Aga Syed Baqir Al Safvi Najafi

HT News Network

Srinagar, Apr 18: Apni Party President Altaf Bukhari on Friday expressed deep sorrow over the demise of prominent religious scholar Allama Aga Syed Baqir Al Safvi Najafi. In his condolence message, Bukhari said, "Inna Lillahi Wa Inna Ilayhi Rajioon. The passing of Allama Aga Syed Baqir Al Safvi Najafi marks the end of an era. He will always be remembered for his profound contributions as a distinguished religious scholar and revered leader. His teachings and wisdom will continue to inspire and guide people for generations to come. This is a tremendous loss, especially for the Muslim community of Kashmir. May Almighty Allah grant his soul the highest place in Jannah." The passing of Allama Najafi has been widely mourned across the Valley, with various sections of society recalling his lifelong dedication to religious scholarship and community service.

Mirwaiz Umar Farooq Condemns Weekly House Arrest, Calls It "Arbitrary and Sectarian"

HT News Network

Srinagar, Apr 18: Mirwaiz Umar Farooq has strongly condemned his recurring house detention every Friday, calling it an arbitrary restriction aimed at silencing his voice and weakening Muslim institutions in the Kashmir Valley. Taking to social media handle X, the Mirwaiz stated that the clampdown is part of a larger agenda to marginalize the Jama Masjid Srinagar and the Mirwaiz institution itself, which have historically been central to the spiritual and political life of the region. He described the action as an attempt to inflict "collective grief" on the Muslim community and those who resist authoritarian policies. Despite filing a petition in the High Court seeking relief, the case remains pending. "In such times, patience remains our only strength," he wrote, urging continued resilience. The repeated restrictions on his movement have drawn criticism from human rights groups and civil society organizations, he added.

Mirwaiz Umar Farooq Condemns Weekly House Arrest, Calls It "Arbitrary and Sectarian"

HT News Network

Srinagar April 18, : Jammu and Kashmir Pradesh Congress Committee (JKPCC) on Friday condoled the sad demise of eminent religious scholar Agha Syed Mohammad Baqar, terming his demise a great loss. J&K Pradesh Congress Committee (JKPCC) President Tariq Hameed Karra has expressed profound grief over the demise of Agha Syed Baqar Ali Al Aafvi Al Najafi and expressed heartfelt condolences to bereaved family and relatives of the Agha Saheb.

JKSA Commends KU Controller for Expedited BALLB Results, Urges Swift Action on Backlogs

Welcomes Student-Centric Reforms in Kashmir University's Examination Wing

HT News Network

Srinagar, Apr 18: The Jammu and Kashmir Students Association (JKSA) on Friday expressed its heartfelt appreciation to Majid Zaman, Controller of Examinations at the University of Kashmir, for his exceptional efforts in ensuring the prompt declaration of BALLB and LLB (Hons) final-year results. In an official statement, Ummar Jamal, National President of the Association, said that, "We extend our sincere gratitude to Controller Majid Zaman for going above and beyond the call of duty. His administrative resolve and swift action in expediting the evaluation process have significantly reduced academic delays." The association had previously appealed to the university's examination authorities to speed up the process. Acknowledging the positive response, Jamal noted, "Time is critical for graduating students. By ensuring the early release of results, Zaman has rescued dozens of law



graduates from academic limbo and enabled them to take the next step in their careers." Reflecting on past issues, Jamal pointed out that the university's examination wing has long struggled with delays and inefficiencies. "Historically, result announcements and exam schedules have been riddled with uncertainty. The changes we're seeing under Mr. Zaman's leadership are not only welcome but remarkable. Unlike many in the administra-

tive hierarchy, he has shown unwavering student-centric commitment — often working beyond official hours to resolve pressing student concerns." Jamal also praised the introduction of the Single Window Clearance System (SWCS) at the university's main campus, calling it a "transformational reform." He said, "The SWCS has streamlined examination-related procedures, cut through bureaucratic red tape, and greatly enhanced student convenience. Alongside a responsive student helpline, these reforms mark a paradigm shift in how KU manages examinations." While lauding these achievements, the association also emphasized the need to address pending issues. "Several students are still awaiting the declaration of their backlog semester results. We urge the Controller's office to expedite these results as well, ensuring that no student is left behind. Backlog clearances are essential for students to graduate and move ahead with their peers," Jamal added further.

Locals Fume as Car Dealers Turn Srinagar Roads into Showroom

HT News Network

Srinagar, Apr 18, : Residents of Barbar Shah and Babademb in Srinagar have expressed serious anger over what they call the unchecked occupation of public roads by local car dealers, who continue to park multiple vehicles for sale along busy stretches, causing frequent traffic jams and endangering public safety. According to locals, the dealers have converted parts of the road into unauthorized extensions of their showrooms, leaving no space for pedestrians and causing obstructions to both private and emergency vehicles. "They are treating public roads like their own private property," said an aggrieved resident from Barbar Shah. While the Traffic Department did swing into action lately and attempted to tow away the illegally parked vehicles from Barbar Shah, their efforts were reportedly met with resistance from the dealer. To the shock of residents, the vehicles were back on the roadside soon after officials left. A similar scene plays out in Babademb near Brarinambal, where another dealer is allegedly using the road to display both branded and second-hand cars. Despite several complaints lodged with the authorities, the problem persists, leaving residents frustrated and concerned about the inaction of enforcement agencies. "We support the administration's efforts, but unless strict and sustained action is taken, this nuisance will continue," said another local from Habakadal.

EDITORIAL

A S Dulat’s book creates ripples across political spectrum in J&K

Former Research and Analysis Wing (RAW) chief Amarjit Singh Dulat has created a flutter among the people especially politicians by claiming in his new book ‘The chief minister and the spy’ that former chief minister and National Conference President Dr. Farooq Abdullah was on board regarding abrogation of Article 370 from Jammu & Kashmir more than five and half years back. The claim has led to ripples in political circles with the people across the political spectrum engaged in slugfest.

In his book the former RAW chief has said that the National Conference privately supported the Bharatiya Janta Party (BJP) led government at the centre about abrogation of Article 370 on August 5, 2019. Dulat’s claim led to reaction from all the political parties and the politicians aimed barbs at their counterparts. Reacting to the claim Dr. Farooq said that the book is fiction and there is no need to believe the same.

He said that he read some pages of the book and after going through the same he decided not to go further. Dr. Farooq got support from his family, friends and colleagues who termed the claim as a figment of imagination and said that the people would not believe the same. On the other hand the politicians belonging to opposition parties in Jammu & Kashmir said that the National Conference is hand in glove with the BJP and the same gets proved every now and then.

The opposition have been hitting hard against the National Conference after the legislative assembly speaker Abdul Rahim Rather disallowed discussion on the Wakf Act on the floor of the house. This was despite the fact that some of the legislators of the National Conference moved adjournment session on April 7 demanding discussion on the Waqf bill. The assembly speaker said that discussion cannot be allowed since some of the people have approached the Supreme Court demanding non-implementation of the Wakf Act.

As far as the claim of the former RAW chief in his book is concerned, the same has provided ammunition to the opposition parties to target the National Conference, especially its President. Dulat has tried to come out in defence of Dr. Farooq by saying that the facts have not been put in correct parlance by some media houses but by that time the damage had already been done. The former RAW chief said that people should read the whole book and they should come out with a viewpoint only after that.

World Heritage Day: Preserving the past, Inspiring the Future

SIKANDER LONE

Every year on April 18, the world pauses to celebrate a shared legacy our cultural and natural heritage. Known formally as the International Day for Monuments and Sites, World Heritage Day serves as a reminder of the rich tapestry of human civilization and the breath-taking wonders of nature that have shaped and defined communities for generations. It is a day not only of celebration but also of commitment—to conserve, protect and respect the diverse heritage that gives meaning to our existence.

The concept of heritage is deeply rooted in the soul of humanity. It transcends geographical boundaries, linguistic differences and political ideologies. Whether it's the ancient ruins of Machu Picchu nestled in the Andes, the grand domes of the Hagia Sophia in Istanbul, or the pristine ecosystems of the Galápagos Islands, heritage embodies the collective memory of humanity. These sites and monuments speak of who we are, where we came from and the paths we have tread to reach the present. They are storytellers etched in stone, soil and tradition.

World Heritage Day originated in 1982, when the International Council on Monuments and Sites proposed the idea to celebrate and raise awareness about the importance of cultural heritage. The following year, UNESCO endorsed the proposal during its General Conference and since then, April 18 has been marked as a day to foster appreciation for heritage and encourage its preservation. The day now holds special relevance in a rapidly modernizing world, where urbanization, climate change, conflict and neglect threaten the very essence of what makes our world unique.

Each year, World Heritage Day is celebrated with a specific theme, highlighting different dimensions of heritage. These themes encourage discourse, education and participation, making heritage preservation a shared societal responsibility. From "Rural Landscapes" to "Shared Cultures, Shared Heritage, Shared Responsibility," each year's focus explores the vast range of heritage sites and the nuanced challenges they face.

The importance of heritage preservation cannot be overstated. Cultural heritage—encompassing historical monuments, traditional architecture, archaeological sites and intangible traditions anchors communities in their identity. It provides continuity in an ever-changing world, serving as a source of pride, belonging



and unity. When communities rally around a shared cultural narrative, it strengthens social cohesion and mutual understanding. Festivals, oral traditions, dances, crafts and rituals are living embodiments of heritage, passed down through generations and constantly evolving to suit new contexts. Without deliberate efforts to safeguard them, these traditions risk fading into oblivion.

Natural heritage, too plays a vital role in our lives. The majestic mountains, serene lakes, dense forests and fragile coral reefs designated as World Heritage Sites are not only visually stunning but also ecologically essential. They offer habitats for endangered species, regulate our climate, and provide sustenance and spiritual inspiration to local communities. Protecting these ecosystems ensures the survival of biodiversity and safeguards the planet for future generations.

In recent decades, however, the challenges to heritage preservation have grown more complex. Armed conflicts, terrorism and vandalism have devastated heritage sites in regions like Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan. Historical cities and sacred sites have been reduced to rubble, erasing centuries of human history in a matter of days. The loss of heritage in conflict zones is not just a cultural tragedy it is a wound to humanity's collective soul, a calculated attack on identity and memory.

Climate change, too is an insidious threat. Rising sea levels, desertification, floods and extreme weather events are putting an increasing number of heritage sites at risk. Venice, the city of canals, is gradually sinking, He glaciers of Yellowstone are melting coral reefs are bleaching at an alarming rate. These transformations are irreversible and unless urgent action is taken, many heritage wonders may exist only in history books in the not-so-distant future.

Urban development and tourism, while offering economic opportunities, can also be double-edged swords. The influx of tourists often leads to wear and tear on ancient monuments, pollution and commer-

cialization of sacred spaces. Over-construction and unregulated expansion can disrupt the harmony of historic neighborhoods, replacing age-old charm with concrete uniformity. Balancing progress with preservation requires careful planning and the involvement of local communities.

One of the most encouraging trends in recent years has been the growing participation of communities in heritage conservation. Gone are the days when preservation was viewed as the exclusive domain of historians, archaeologists or governments. Today local residents' activists, students and artists are actively contributing to safeguarding their heritage. Community-led initiatives have successfully restored old buildings, revived forgotten festivals and documented oral histories, breathing new life into traditions that were on the brink of extinction.

Education plays a pivotal role in this process. By instilling a sense of appreciation and responsibility among young people, societies can ensure that future generations become stewards of their heritage. Schools, museums, cultural institutions and digital platforms have become powerful tools to disseminate knowledge and foster a sense of ownership. The use of technology, including 3D scanning, virtual reality and digital archiving, has revolutionized the way we document and experience heritage, making it more accessible and engaging.

Another vital aspect of heritage preservation is inclusivity. For too long, heritage narratives have been dominated by elite histories, often sidelining the contributions of marginalized communities. World Heritage Day is an opportunity to broaden our understanding of heritage to include the voices of indigenous peoples, women, minorities and other underrepresented groups. Their stories, customs and wisdom form an integral part of our collective heritage and deserve recognition and respect.

In the Indian context, World Heritage Day holds special resonance. With a civilization stretching back thousands of years, India is home to

an astonishing array of heritage sites from the sun-kissed temples of Khajuraho to the Mughal splendor of the Taj Mahal, from the rock-cut caves of Ajanta and Ellora to the Himalayan monasteries of Ladakh. These monuments, alongside India's vibrant festivals, traditional arts and languages are testimonies to the country's cultural diversity and resilience. However, they also face challenges such as pollution, overcrowding and insufficient maintenance. It is imperative for government bodies, heritage experts and citizens to come together and ensure that this treasure trove is protected.

In Kashmir, the idea of heritage holds an even more poignant significance. The region's ancient shrines, wooden mosques, carpet weaving traditions and Sufi music are rich with centuries of syncretic culture. Yet, prolonged conflict and natural calamities have taken a toll on many of these elements. On World Heritage Day, it becomes especially important to recognize the need to preserve Kashmir's unique identity, not merely as a tourist destination but as a living museum of history and harmony. The rebuilding of old shrines, promotion of local art and safeguarding of oral traditions in Kashmir are steps that deserve support and celebration.

As we observe World Heritage Day, it is crucial to understand that heritage is not a static relic of the past it is a living, breathing entity that evolves with time. It is shaped not just by bricks and stones but by the values, dreams and struggles of people. Preserving heritage is not merely about restoring a crumbling wall or cataloging ancient artifacts. It is about nurturing a sense of belonging, promoting intercultural dialogue and fostering respect for different ways of life.

In a world often divided by conflict, fear and misunderstanding, heritage can act as a powerful unifier. It reminds us that despite our differences, we all share a common human journey. The preservation of heritage, therefore, is not a luxury—it is a necessity. It is a bridge between the past and the future, a mirror reflecting our greatest achievements and our deepest wisdom.

On this World Heritage Day, let us renew our commitment to protecting the legacy that has been entrusted to us. Let us listen to the stories whispered by ancient stones, celebrate the melodies of forgotten songs and walk gently through the sacred landscapes of our ancestors. For in doing so, we not only honor those who came before us we also pave the way for those yet to come.

Reassessing Education: Need For Improvement In J&K’s Govt Schools

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Academic monitoring at elementary and secondary levels involves a systematic approach to identifying and tracking the progress of students in different areas of study. It is a crucial stage for both teachers and inspectors to ensure students are making adequate progress.

At the elementary level, literacy skills along with cognitive development are of utmost importance. Teachers in our J&K must understand that if they cannot help students at this level to gain letter recognition, sound correspondence, sight word reading, and reading comprehension skills—then what is the purpose of this government education system in J&K?

Of late, I was chosen as a member of the academic monitoring committee by the complex head. After visiting a few schools, some questions struck my mind based on observations at the ground level:

Why, in a village of the same habitation, similar financial strength of the people, similar qualifications of educators, and comparable literacy rates, is one elementary government school as competent as a private school, while other government schools lag far behind in writing, reading, and basic numeracy skills? The lack of effort is quite evident in these schools. The educators are well-versed in pedagogy, but the effort put in is miserable. How can we justify this? We earn our livelihood from these schools, yet our efforts are questionable.

Why does an educator often blame parental care in government schools? It's often nothing but a cover for weaknesses. Let us do some arithmetic:

A child is admitted to a school at the age of three-plus and spends six hours daily with us (educators). Do we mean the child spends more time with their parents? A four-year-old sleeps for about thirteen hours. The simple arithmetic shows the child spends more conscious



hours with teachers. This process continues until they reach the age of 14.

For God's sake, if a student, after passing 8th grade, does not have letter recognition, sight word reading, or basic numeracy, whose fault is it? Who will accept this narrative of educators? Eleven years

with us and still lacking basic word recognition, as highlighted recently by the ASER (Annual Status of Education Report).

During academic monitoring, I discussed this arithmetic with fellow educators, and they presented another narrative: the late distribution

of textbooks by JK BOSE. But for a nursery-level child, what role does a textbook really play? Can't we teach them basic reading and numeracy skills without it? Changing narratives can't defend us anymore. Our reputation is at stake. People are now aware.

The School Education

Department (SED) leaves no stone unturned in trying to improve the image of government schools in J&K. But the major responsibility lies with us—educators.

For small things like park maintenance, decorating schools, or filling a ditch in the school lawn, should we really wait for official approvals or funds? We can manage these minor tasks ourselves—if we truly own the schools. We can even spend from our own pockets if needed.

The RET scheme was a praiseworthy step by the government. But many of the teachers who were appointed under it did not do justice to their role. Imagine the beauty of teaching the children of your own village—you know their background, their family history, their needs. Still, the students in these schools score poorly in FLN (Foundational Literacy and Numeracy), word recognition, reading, and writing.

To improve the standards of government schools, sustained efforts from educators are required. Key areas include:

- Ownership of schools in all respects by educators.
- Regular Parent-Teacher Meetings to build a strong school-home connection.
- Stop building false narratives and instead focus on making the system result-oriented.
- Strong focus on foundational literacy and numeracy (FLN).
- Mentorship programs for new teachers to foster continuous improvement.
- Regular assessments to monitor student progress and identify gaps.
- External evaluations to ensure schools meet desired learning outcomes.
- A three-tier academic monitoring system: one by the complex head, another at the district level, and the third at the divisional level.
- Importantly, the monitoring teams must include top-notch educationists, not clerks.
- Use assessment data to reshuffle teachers immediately where necessary.

The writer is a teacher at Boys Secondary School, Narbal

Compassion As Worship: Islam’s Timeless Teachings On Animal Welfare

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Islam, a religion of mercy and compassion, emphasises the importance of treating all living beings with kindness and respect. The Quran and Hadith provide guidance on animal welfare, highlighting the need to care for and protect animals. However, animal abuse remains a pressing concern worldwide.

Islamic Teachings on Animal Welfare

The Quran underscores the significance of animal welfare in several verses. For instance:

- “And cattle He has created for you (men); from them ye derive warmth and numerous benefits, and of their (meat) ye eat.” (Surah An-Nahl 16:5)

- “And they carry your heavy loads to lands that ye could not (otherwise) reach except with souls distressed: for your Lord is indeed Most Kind, Most Merciful.” (Surah An-Nahl 16:7)

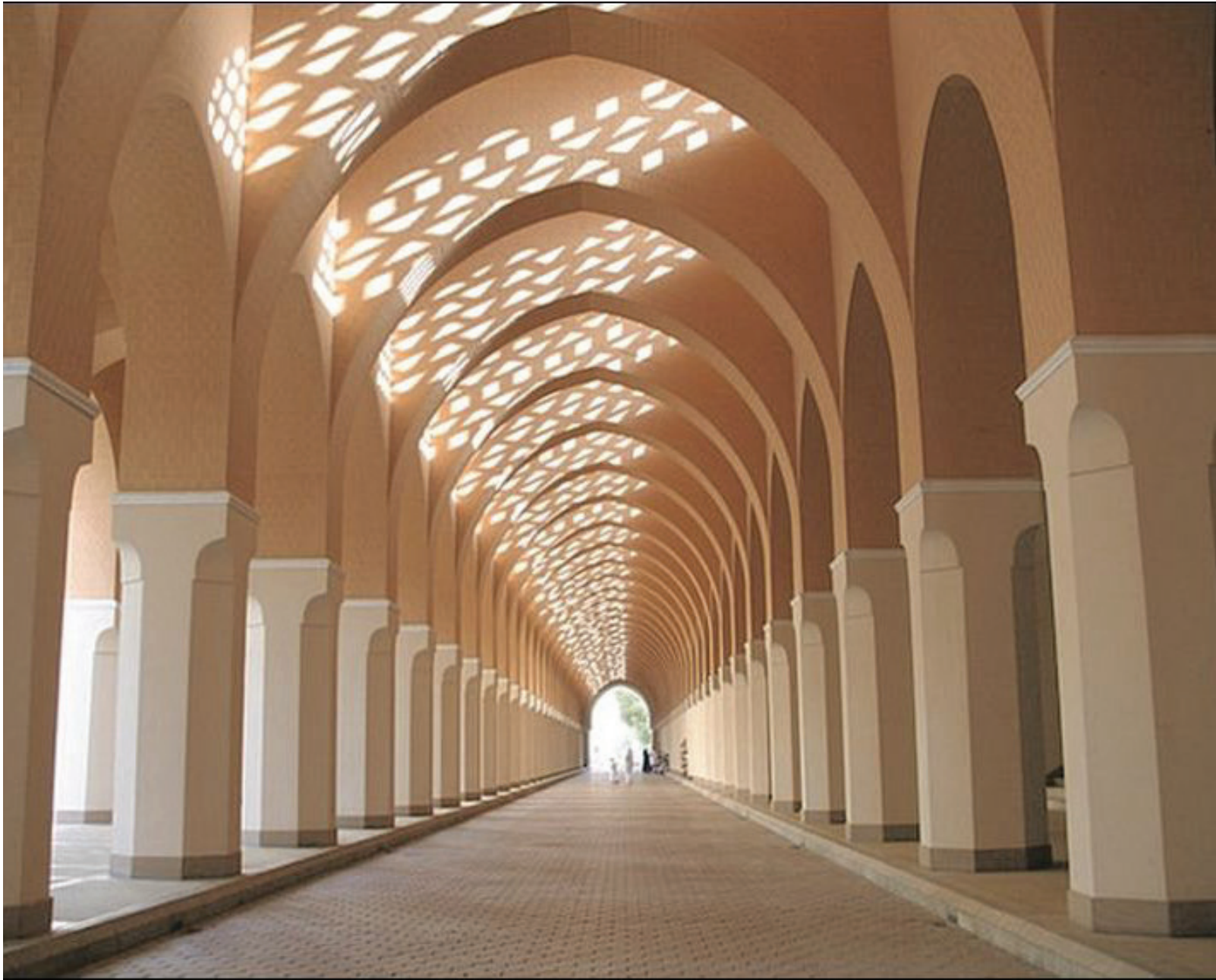
- “And (He has created) horses, mules, and donkeys, for you to ride and as an adornment; And He has created other things of which ye have no knowledge.” (Surah An-Nahl 16:8)

- “We have made animals subject to you, that ye may be grateful.” (Surah Al-Haj 22:36)

- “There is not a moving (living) creature on earth, nor a bird that flies with its two wings, but are communities like you. We have neglected nothing in the Book, then unto their Lord they (all) shall be gathered.” (Surah Al-Anam 6:38)

The Prophet (PBUH’s) Example

The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) exemplified compassion towards animals, demonstrating the importance of kindness and mercy. He said: - “There is a reward (ajr) for helping any living creature” (Hadith: Bukhari and Muslim).



- The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) condemned the beating of animals and forbade striking, branding, or marking them on the face.

- He cursed and chastised those who mistreated animals and gave praise to those who showed kind-

ness.

The Disturbing Reality of Animal Abuse

Despite Islamic teachings on animal welfare, animal abuse persists globally. Some alarming statistics include:

- Approximately one animal faces abuse every minute in the United States.

- An estimated 10 million animals die from abuse or cruelty annually in the United States.

- Over 110 million animals are killed in U.S. laboratories each year

for experiments.

- Animal hoarding affects around 250,000 animals annually in the United States.

- Nearly 400,000 dogs that enter shelters across the country are euthanised annually.

Animal Abuse in Various Settings

- Zoos: Only about 2,800 animal exhibitors in the U.S. have United States Department of Agriculture licenses, with fewer than 10% accredited by the Association of Zoos & Aquariums (AZA).

- Circuses: Animal neglect and abuse occur in circuses, where trainers use tools like electric prods, bullhooks, and whips to force animals to perform.

- Laboratories: Millions of animals are subjected to experiments, including chemical, cosmetic, food, and drug testing, in U.S. laboratories each year.

- Shelters: The United States has around 4,000 brick-and-mortar animal shelters, with varying intake and transfer rates.

The Importance of Reporting Animal Abuse

Reporting animal abuse is crucial to preventing further harm and ensuring justice for animals. Unfortunately, less than 0.01% of cases are reported annually, highlighting the need for increased awareness and action.

Creating a Compassionate World

By understanding Islamic teachings on animal welfare and the reality of animal abuse, we can work towards creating a more compassionate world. We can make a difference by:

- Reporting animal abuse and neglect

- Supporting organisations that promote animal welfare

- Advocating for animal welfare policies and laws

- Treating animals with kindness, respect, and compassion

Together, we can foster a world where animals are valued and protected, reflecting the mercy and compassion emphasised in Islam.

The writer is a BVSc & AH student at Shuhama, SKUAST-K

Observing Fire Services Week amidst frequent fires



RAYEES AHMAD KUMAR

Each year the fire services week is observed from 14-20 April, to honor the memory of 66 fire services personals who lost their lives in a fire and explosion at Victoria Dock Mumbai in 1944. The department launches several public engagement initiatives including the release of a fire safety documentary showcasing real-life fire fighting missions and the role of emergency services, release of posters, banners and hand bills for public awareness lectures, essay writing, painting competitions, health check up for jawans and public and medical first aid programs. This year's theme is "Unite to Ignite a Fire Safety India", which emphasizes collective responsibility and community involvement in fire prevention. From its primary duty of preventing accidental fires, which cause huge property loss and sometimes claims precious lives also, the fire and emergency services remain at forefront during natural calamities. During the devastating floods of 2014, apart from state and national disaster response forces, our military and paramilitary forces including fire fighters, helped people to a great extent to take a sigh of relief during testing times. During the national festival of Independence Day and Republic Day celebrations at national capital and state

capitals, the energetic and enthusiastic soldiers of this force display miraculous skills and stunts, revealing their capability and efficiency to deal with crises and challenging situations. In schools, hospitals and other public offices and places, the department regularly conducts workshops and awareness campaigns to aware people especially our women folk, who often remain busy in kitchens for household chorus, about disaster management and firefighting techniques, aiming to reduce the property and human loss during fire related incidents.

However, the long dry spell and scanty snowfall recorded during this year's winter period, has posed bigger challenges before the department to deal with any kind of adversity and tragedy. Our lofty mountains and high altitude peaks, which earlier would be blanketed by a thick cover of silvery snow for months together, are now completely bald. There is strong likelihood of facing scarcity of drinking water as well as water for irrigation purposes, besides making it extremely difficult to extinguish the fire in case of an emergency. Nowadays as we witness, our green gold is catching regular and intermittent fires, across all the regions of Jammu kashmir, causing huge loss and posing a great threat to wildlife there also. Forest fires in Pirpanchal regions, South and North Kashmir areas have caused a heavy devastation recently, necessitating to make men and machinery always alert to meet an untoward eventuality. There can be many causes of forest fires, but awareness campaigns and conducting seminars in educational institutions alone can't make wonders unless we as a whole work together in a team spirit to conserve our precious natural resources which sustain our

livelihood and maintain ecological balance. The department of fire services, besides equipping it's officials with the latest tools to mitigate the fires in the residential and commercial areas, must also train them to extinguish fires in the forest areas. As we have seen recently the officials of forest department alongside the unequipped general public alone couldn't bring down the fires in forest areas. Therefore a comprehensive mechanism and practicable strategy is need of the hour to bring an end to the increasing forest fires and conserving our invaluable green gold. It is dwelling place to thousands of living species, besides a treasure trove of countless herbal plants.

In residential areas, the frequent devastating fires leave hundreds of people homeless and property worth crores get lost in hours. To cite some examples, the fires of Kishtwar, Kadipora Anantanag, Baramulla, Sonamarg and Bandipora have left people homeless and property worth billions was razed to ground within hours. To minimize such incidents in near future both in residential areas and woods, and in order to protect people and their property, the department should adopt latest procedures and techniques besides making use of modern technology and suggesting government to devise plans to reduce the chances of imminent fires. As responsible citizens, it is our fundamental duty to save our natural resources especially forests and at a time when we are witnessing rising cases of forest fires, we must prepare ourselves to mitigate the concerning situations. Bringing stronger legislations to restrict human entries in woods can also prove to be a wonderful idea.

Writer is a columnist hailing from Qazigund Kashmir.

Disillusioned with Abroad



VIJAY GARG

The news is shocking that the number of students going abroad last year has decreased by 25 per cent. While the number of students going to the US has decreased by 36 and the number of students travelling to Canada by 34 per cent. More or less the same situation is UK too. These figures are of the year 2024. Surely when the figures of overthinking will emerge in the Trump period, they will be more shocking. There was a time that the passion for studying was on the boom by going to Pardes in students. Every year, the parents were sending abroad to read the children by earning blood and sweat and cutting their stomach. Elsewhere, cases of sending children to teach abroad by selling farms and mortgaging houses also came to light. In fact, the facility of getting an education loan from banks in the country also facilitated the travel of students abroad. Every year millions of students were going abroad for golden dreams. These passions were particularly seen in Punjab, which was sixty per cent of the students going from all over India in countries like Canada-America, etc. It was not necessary that all these students

were meritorious and were all enrolled in top universities of the world. These also had many universities which were being run just for the purpose of earning from foreign students. At the same time there were some universities that remained the source of the earnings of agents sending people abroad illegally. A huge amount of money was being recovered by sending youth to these countries as a student. Indeed, gradually the students and their parents went on to realise the reality. They realized that they could find degrees as they were by spending rough money, but these jobs and green cards are not guaranteed. Yes, some students would somehow get the cost of their studies and the cost of taking off the house. Indeed, gradually the murmurers and their priorities of the U.S., the U.K., and the Canada governments made the students look to the realty of rough land. The reality of the vegetables that the agents had shown to the students began to come out. Apart from this, the shattered economies after the Corona period, the reduction in attractive offers of the job, the difficulties in getting visas, the heightened attacks on Indians of white-skinned people from these countries created a state of disillusionment among the students. There were racial attacks on many Indian students in the US last year. Many students were murdered and many were injured. Anti-India campaigns in Canada and Britain and the anti-India attitude of Justin Trudeau in Canada

also disillusioned students. By the way, instead of earning foreign exchange, we were sending billions of rupees to these countries every year. On the other hand, the meaningful aspect of disillusionment of students going abroad is that now these talents can contribute to the development of the nation by staying in the country. Kudrat's law is that plants bloom in their urvara land itself due to favourable environment. These are the failure of our policymakers that even after seven decades of independence, we could not give the country international standards universities. Not able to develop the quality of skill development in general education. Not able to give creative options to the longing for government jobs in students. From America's Silicon Valley to all IT-related big companies are running Indian talents. After all, why are we not able to give such an environment in the country to Indian Medhais, that they can benefit the country from new discoveries and research. India is the country with the most youth in the world. If we are not able to make better use of their ability, aptitude and talent, it is our big failure. The ruling forces of the country have to think seriously in the direction of why students were on a spree to go abroad. India's resolutions developed can be completed only by giving students a favourable environment.

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



Div Com Jammu reviews restoration of public amenities disrupted by windstorm Orders speedy assessment of loss to public property

■ HT News Network

JAMMU, APRIL 18: Divisional Commissioner Jammu Ramesh Kumar today convened a meeting to assess the damages caused due to Wind Storm and reviewed the status of restoration works. The meeting attended by Managing Director JPDCL, Commissioner Jammu Municipal Corporation, Deputy Commissioners from Jammu Division, Chief Engineers of PDD, Jal Shakti, XEns and concerned officials apprised the sectors wise affect of Wind Storm and the damages to their infrastructure. The Divisional Commissioner took stock of the district- wise damages suffered to power, Jal

Shakti and Roads infrastructure, while seeking details from the respective Deputy Commissioners. MD JPDCL, and Commissioner JMC, also apprised the Divisional Commissioner on the damages caused to Power infrastructure and public amenities infrastructure due to the wind storm and the restoration works thereof. The Divisional Commissioner was also apprised about the works completed to restore the power infrastructure, water supply schemes and clearing of roads across the division. It was informed that maximum restoration works, in terms of power and water supply, have been done and remaining will be completed by today evening



and tomorrow. Chief Engineer PWD apprised that roads have

been cleared of fallen trees and landslides triggered by the

storm. The Div Com directed the con-

cerned officials to restore the power infrastructure for 100% supply to domestic areas by today evening and for agricultural lands by tomorrow. He called for war footing efforts by the ground staff of the power department. The Divisional Commissioner further directed the Deputy Commissioners to closely monitor the restoration works and submit a comprehensive report of the damages and restoration by 7 pm today. The Divisional Commissioner asked the concerned officials to expedite the repair of damages to public infrastructure and also assess the loss to public property and livestock to provide relief to affected persons from SDRF.

The Divisional Commissioner also asked for cleaning and desilting of drainage networks in Jammu City. MD JPDCL, and Commissioner JMC, also apprised the Divisional Commissioner on the damages caused to Power infrastructure and public amenities infrastructure due to the wind storm and the restoration works thereof. The Divisional Commissioner was also apprised about the works completed to restore the power infrastructure, water supply schemes and clearing of roads across the division. It was informed that maximum restoration works, in terms of power and water supply, have been done and remaining will be completed by today evening and tomorrow.

SKUAST-K Hosts Capacity-Building Training on Natural Farming for Ladakh and J&K

■ DR.AB QAYOOM

Srinagar, Apr, 18: Two comprehensive training programmes on Natural Farming were inaugurated today at the Directorate of Extension/SAMETI, Sher-e-Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology of Kashmir (SKUAST-K), aimed at equipping KVK Scientists, State and District Officials, and Farmer Master Trainers from the Union Territories of Ladakh and Jammu & Kashmir with sustainable and climate-resilient farming practices. Organized under the Centre of Natural Farming at SKUAST-K in collaboration with MANAGE, Hyderabad, Department of Agriculture, and the Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare, Government of India, the pro-



grammes will run from April 17 to 20, 2025, under the National Mission on Natural Farming. Prof. Nazir Ahmad Ganai, Hon'ble Vice Chancellor, SKUAST-K, graced the inaugural session as the Chief Guest. Praising the Directorate of Extension's efforts to mainstream natural farming, Prof. Ganai described Ladakh as "Naturally Natural," and highlighted its potential to emerge as a model region for ecologically sustainable agriculture. He stressed the need to preserve Ladakh's fragile eco-

system while ensuring food and livelihood security through natural farming. Underscoring the role of technology in agriculture, Prof. Ganai urged district officials to develop a mobile application to maintain a detailed crop chronology database of farm families practicing natural farming in Ladakh. He assured full institutional support to the UT in aligning its agri-allied sectors with modern, sustainable practices. In her welcome address, Prof. Raihana Habib Kanthi, Director Extension/SAME-

TI, provided a comprehensive overview of natural farming, highlighting its relevance to Ladakh's unique agro-climatic conditions. She emphasized the importance of capacity building at the grassroots level through such trainings. The programme includes interactive sessions, field visits to natural farming sites, and practical training on bio-input preparation. Participants include scientists from the Directorate of Extension, experts, officials from Leh and Kargil, and Farmer Master Trainers, fostering a dynamic exchange of knowledge and experience. These trainings signify a pivotal move toward promoting low-input, resilient, and eco-friendly agriculture in the Himalayan region.

JMC workers working tirelessly to keep city clean: JMC Commissioner

■ HT News Network

JAMMU, APRIL 18: Reiterating the commitment of the Jammu Municipal Corporation (JMC) to maintain a neat and clean city, Commissioner Dr. Devansh Yadav stated that officers, officials from various departments, and sanitation workers are working tirelessly to uphold this mission. In accordance with the Commissioner's directions, two teams—comprising the concerned Deputy Commissioners, Sanjay Badyal and Lal Chand, Chief Transport Officers (CTOs), Dharamveer Singh and Talat

Ahmad, Transport Officers (TOs), and enforcement staff were constituted to assess the on-ground situation in the aftermath of the recent heavy rain and storm. These teams conducted inspections across various areas in the South and North Zones, including Gandhi Nagar.

The diligent efforts of the CTO section, almost all major roads have been cleared of fallen trees and obstructions. However, some scattered garbage and tree branches remain in a few areas. Men and machinery are already on the job to ensure their swift removal.

Additionally, manual sweeping and lifting of small refuse heaps lying along footpaths is required. Sanitation workers have been actively engaged in sweeping operations and clearing the refuse to restore cleanliness.

Appreciating the relentless dedication of field staff and sanitation workers, the Commissioner commended their round-the-clock efforts to restore normalcy. He also urged the citizens of Jammu to extend their cooperation to JMC teams and promptly report any unattended areas for timely action.

PUBLIC NOTICE

I have lost my Number plate of My Motor cycle bearing registration no JK04C 4416. Now I am applying for its duplicate if anybody have any objection in this regard He/ She contact with (ARTO) BUDGAM within seven days from the publication of this notice after that no objection will be entertained .

Name.....ABDUL MAJID SOFI
S/O ..ABDUL AZIZ SOFI
R/O ..WARA SANGAM
Distt ...BUDGAM

PUBLIC NOTICE

It is inform to all general public through the medium of notice that i mohammad ramzan sheikh s/o lassa sheikh r/o kripal pora sarie i was born on 01-01-1950 now i want to obtain dob certificate if any body have any objection regarding issuance of d o b certificate he she the context of bdo singpora with in period of seven days

ازعدالت ایگزیکٹو

مجسٹریٹ درج اول ویلگام

مضمون: فیضان عاشق ولد عاشق حسین مکار سرائی ماگام بابت تاریخ پیدائش 31-10-2007

اشتہار بغرض آگاہی ہر خاص و عام
معاملہ مندر یہ عنوان الصدر کے نسبت درخواست سائل / سائلہ کی دفتر ہدائیں زیر سماعت ہے سائل / سائلہ کی تاریخ پیدائش سیر کیلٹ مطابق رکاڈ 31-10-2007 ہے اس بارے میں اگر کسی بھی شخص یا شخص کو کوئی نذر یا اعتراض ہو تو وہ سات دن کے اندر دفتر ہدائیں پیش کر میں میعاد ختم ہونے کے بعد کوئی بھی اعتراض قابل قبول نہیں ہوگا

ایگزیکٹو مجسٹریٹ درج اول ویلگام

ازعدالت ایگزیکٹو

مجسٹریٹ درج اول ویلگام

مضمون: منظور احمد اراقراء احمد تاجیہ احمد اولاد احمد عبدالہد اراقراء سرائی مجید آباد بابت تاریخ پیدائش

اشتہار بغرض آگاہی ہر خاص و عام
معاملہ مندر یہ عنوان الصدر کے نسبت درخواست سائل / سائلہ کی دفتر ہدائیں زیر سماعت ہے سائل / سائلہ کی تاریخ پیدائش سیر کیلٹ مطابق رکاڈ 12-10-2019 / 29-01-2018 / 06-06-2016 ہے اس بارے میں اگر کسی بھی شخص یا شخص کو کوئی نذر یا اعتراض ہو تو وہ سات دن کے اندر دفتر ہدائیں پیش کر میں میعاد ختم ہونے کے بعد کوئی بھی اعتراض قابل قبول نہیں ہوگا

ایگزیکٹو مجسٹریٹ درج اول ویلگام

PUBLIC NOTICE

It is inform to all general public notice that i rukiya qurashie w/o aijaz ahmad qurashie R/o diver yakman pora that my son Hayat qurashie is born on 10-01-2023 now i want to obtain dob certificate if any body have any objection regarding issuance of dob He she the context of bdo singpora with in period of seven days.

Yours faith fully
Rukiya qurashie
W/o aijaz ahmad qurashie
Diver yakman pora

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 SAFAN RATHER & MOHAMMAD IRFAN RATHER S/O MOHAMMAD RAFI RATHER R/O WAGOORA Tehsil WAGOORA Distt. Baramulla having verified the date of Birth as 02/11/2020 & 13/03/2019 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 entertained .

Executive Magistrate
1st Class KREERI

Congress Team Meets Omar Abdullah In Jammu, Discusses Political Situation

■ HT News Network



Jammu, Apr 18 : A high-level Congress team led by national general secretary Syed Naseer Hussain on Friday called on Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah here and discussed the current political landscape in the Union Territory. Flanked by AICC general secretary G A Mir and Jammu and Kashmir Congress chief Tariq Hameed Karra, the Rajya Sabha MP met Abdullah at his residence, the party leaders said.

They were engaged in a productive meeting with the chief minister, they said. "The discussion focused on the INDIA alliance and the current political landscape in Jammu and Kashmir, highlighting collaborative efforts and the importance of addressing contemporary challenges in the region," a senior leader said.

The Congress is a coalition partner in the Omar Abdullah's government. (Agencies)

High Court Seeks IO's Personal Appearance in Custodial Torture Case of Makhan Din

Notice Issued to Top Officials; Petitioners Seek CBI Probe

■ HT News Network

Jammu, Apr 18, : Justice Wasim Sadiq Nargal of the High Court of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh at Jammu has directed the personal appearance of the Investigating Officer (SHO, Police Station Billawar) along with the case diary file in connection with FIR No. 0032 of 2025, an alleged custodial torture case involving a tribal youth, Makhan Din. The case pertains to serious allegations of custodial torture leading to the death of 26-year-old Makhan Din, who reportedly consumed poison after releasing a viral video on February 5, in which he claimed he was brutally tortured by Billawar Police to force a false confession of links with militants.

The directive came in response to a writ petition filed by Makhan Din's father, Muhammad Mureed, and widow, Juna Begum, seeking transfer of the investigation to the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) to ensure a fair and impartial probe. The petitioners, through Advocate Appu Singh Salathia, argued that the local police cannot be trusted to investigate a case in which its own personnel are the accused. Justice Nargal also issued notices to the Chief Secretary, Home Secretary, Principal Secretary to the Lieutenant Governor, Director CBI, DGP J&K, IGP Jammu, SSP Kathua, and SHO Billawar. Senior AAG Monika Kohli accepted the notices and was granted a week to file a response.

The petitioners contended that despite a dying declaration, no FIR was initially registered. It was only after directions from a magistrate that an FIR was lodged on March 9. However, they alleged that names of the accused police officials, mentioned in the complaint, were omitted from the FIR, and an earlier action-taken report had already given them a clean chit.

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is for information of general public that the (Electric bill) power connection is registered on the name FAYAZ AHMAD SHUGO S/O ABDUL REHMAN SHUGO . Now this Connection bearing Consumer ID NO 0203050000275 with smart meter no k9004326 wants to be transferred on my name SYED MOHAMMAD SHAFI . S/O SYED ABDUL HUQ R/O UMARABAD SRINAGAR . If anybody have any objection in this regard He/She may file his/her objection in the concerned PDD office within seven days from the date of publication of this notice after that no objection will be entertained.

Name...SYED MOHAMMAD SHAFI
S/O ...SYED ABDUL HUQ
R/O UMARABAD SRINAGAR
DISTT..... SRINAGAR





DC Bandipora, MD review progress of Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) emphasise timely completion of works

■ HT News Network

BANDIPORA, APRIL 18: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Bandipora, Manzoor Ahmad Qadri and Mission Director (MD) Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM), Khurshed Ahmad Shah, today jointly reviewed the implementation status of the Jal Jeevan Mission in a meeting held here. On the occasion, the Executive Engineer Jal Shakti Department Bandipora provided a comprehensive briefing on the ongoing JJM projects in the district, highlighting the current progress and the challenges

faced. It was informed that 121 schemes, with 240 works, are currently underway across the three sub-divisions of Bandipora, out of which 60 schemes comprising 160 works have been successfully completed. The meeting focused on a detailed review of the progress of civil works, mechanical works, and the status of electric substations under the JJM projects. The officers also discussed the ongoing efforts towards achieving the 'Har Ghar Jal' target and reviewed the progress of Functional Household Tap Connections (FHTC).



MD JJM urged the officers to expedite the work on pending JJM schemes and ensure the timely completion of all ongoing projects.

He emphasized the importance of simultaneous actions, including dumping of filtration media while constructing filtration plants besides instructing the Executive Engineer Mechanical to ensure the swift installation of necessary machinery and equipment. Shah further emphasized the need for seamless coordination between all concerned departments to resolve any issues that might hinder the smooth execution of the works. He asked all Executive Engineers to keep the Deputy Commissioner informed of issues hampering the progress of works for their prompt

redressal. Addressing the meeting, Deputy Commissioner emphasized the importance of maintaining high quality standards in all ongoing works and ensuring transparency at every level of execution. He also called for proactive planning and regular monitoring to address ground-level challenges effectively and achieve the targets within the stipulated timelines. Among others, the meeting was attended by SE Mechanical North, V.K Panditha, CPO Mohammad Maqbool Lone, Executive Engineers, AEEs, JE's, and other concerned officers.

MLA Kupwara reviews developmental scenario of Kupwara town

■ HT News Network

KUPWARA, APRIL 18: Member of Legislative Assembly (MLA) Kupwara, Mir Mohammad Fayaz today chaired a meeting of concerned officers and stakeholders here at D.C Office Kupwara to review the developmental scenario of Kupwara town. Deputy Commissioner Kupwara, Ayushi Sudan was also present in the meeting. On the occasion, MLA emphasized the importance of coordinated efforts to improve public infrastructure, sanitation, road connectivity, and overall urban services in the town. He reviewed the status of key projects including road macadamization, drainage improvement, solid waste management, street lighting, and ongoing works under the District Capex Budget. Stressing on the need for accountability and transparency, MLA directed concerned departments to strictly adhere to timelines and



maintain quality standards in all works. He also called for expediting the completion of pending projects and initiating new development works in response to public demands. During the meeting, Mir Fayaz took note of several public grievances related to basic amenities and directed officials to ensure swift redressal. He assured that the government remains committed to the holistic develop-

ment of Kupwara town and urged officials to work with dedication and a people-first approach. Deputy Commissioner also spoke and emphasized the importance of coordination among various departments for achieving better results on the ground. The meeting was attended by CPO Kupwara, Executive Officer MC Kupwara, officers from R&B and representatives from traders and other associations.

Training/ orientation program for YUVA DOOTs held at Anantnag

■ HT News Network

ANANTNAG, APRIL 18: A day-long training-cum-orientation program under Mission YUVA was today held for YUVA DOOTs at Dak Bunglow Khanabal, Anantnag. The training aimed at enhancing the capacity and effectiveness of YUVA DOOTs in promoting entrepreneurship and self-employment at the grassroots level. The event was presided over by the Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC) Anantnag, Sandeep Singh Bali. In his address, Bali emphasized the importance of youth empowerment and their role in driving sustainable development through entrepreneurship. He motivated the DOOTs to become catalysts of change, and assured them of comprehensive administrative support in tackling any field-level challenges and stressed the importance of community engagement in fostering a vibrant entrepreneurial ecosystem. Assistant Director (AD) Employment Anantnag encouraged the YUVA DOOTs to work with zeal and dedication in achieving their outreach and support targets under the mission. Resource persons from various departments including the Nodal Officer, JKEDI, Lead District Manager (LDM) Anantnag, Employment Officer DE&CC Anantnag, and Career Counselling Officer DE&CC Anantnag, delivered sector-specific presentations. They also demonstrated the features and usage of the Mission YUVA app/portal, equipping the participants with practical know-how. The interactive sessions facilitated meaningful dialogue, enabling participants to seek clarifications and share insights.

NSS IUST Organizes Series of Events to Commemorate Ambedkar Jayanti

■ HT News Network

AWANTIPORA, APRIL 18: The National Service Scheme (NSS), Islamic University of Science and Technology (IUST), organized a weekly series of events to commemorate the 134th birth anniversary of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, the architect of the Indian Constitution and a champion of social justice. The celebrations were conducted as per the guidelines of the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, Government of India. The events began with a collective reading of the Preamble to the Constitution, led by Dr. Tariq Ahmad Ganaie, University Program Coordinator for NSS, IUST, who emphasized Dr. Ambedkar's lasting vision for equality and justice. A symbolic Padyatra (foot march) was held from Campus 1 to Campus 2, with participants carrying banners to highlight the significance of Ambedkar Jayanti and spread awareness of his contributions. In alignment with a green initiative, a plantation drive took place on the university premises, reinforcing a commitment to sustainable development and community welfare. The celebrations saw participation from NSS volunteers, university Deans, Directors, Heads of Departments, university Officers, students and scholars.

Police solve snatching case in Handwara, accused arrested

■ HT News Network

HANDWARA, APRIL 18: In a significant breakthrough, Police in Handwara have successfully solved a handbag snatching case by arresting an accused person and recovered stolen gold from his possession. On April 15, 2025, Police Station Handwara received a written complaint from one lady (name withheld) resident of Waghat Palpora, Magam. The complainant reported that while she was in Handwara market, she was followed by an unknown person who later snatched her handbag (which contain gold ornaments) near the New Bus Stand Handwara and fled from the scene. Taking cognizance of the matter, a case vide FIR No. 76/2025 under relevant sections of law was registered at police station and investigation was initiated. During investigation, a dedicated team was assigned to trace the accused. Investigating team with strenuous efforts and by using all technical analysis and available means zeroed in on one suspected person who confessed his involvement in the commission of crime. The accused has been identified as Basit Fayaz Tantray son of Fayaz Ahmad Tantray resident of Khonbal Handwara. He was subsequently arrested, and on his disclosure, the stolen gold ornaments.

DC Kupwara reviews arrangements for conduct of NEET Exam

■ HT News Network

KUPWARA, APRIL 18: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Kupwara, Ayushi Sudan, today convened a meeting of concerned officers to review the arrangements for the smooth and fair conduct of the National Eligibility cum Entrance Test (NEET) 2025 in the district which is scheduled to be held on 4th May. On the occasion, DC took a detailed briefing on various logistical and security measures being put in place at all designated NEET examination centers across the district. She emphasized the importance of maintaining a conducive and secure environment for the aspirants and directed officers to ensure all the guidelines issued by the National Testing Agency (NTA) are followed in letter and spirit. She impressed upon the officers to ensure fool proof arrangements in place well before the starting of the examination to ensure fair and transparent conduct of the examination. DC directed the



officers to hold a dry run at least one week before the date of examination to sort out any issues well in time. It was given out in the meeting that a Control Room at district level will be established for better and timely coordination among the officers. The Control Room shall also monitor the whole examination process through CCTV surveillance. The meeting was attended by ACR Kupwara, CEO, ASP Kupwara, Dy. SP Handwara, NEET Coordinator, Centre Superintendents and other concerned stakeholders.

Training/ orientation programme for Yuva DOOTs held at Kulgam

■ Farooq Rather

KULGAM, APRIL 18: For the training cum capacity building of Yuva DOOTs under Mission YUVA, a day-long training-cum-orientation program was held today for Yuva DOOTs in Conference Hall, Mini-secretariat Kulgam. Additional District Development Commissioner (ADDC) Kulgam, M Altaf Khan presided over the event as chief guest and highlighted the significance of empowering youth at the grassroots level to drive entrepreneurship and self-employment. The training aimed to equip Yuva DOOTs with the necessary skills and knowledge to connect with and support potential entrepreneurs in their respective panchayats. They were trained extensively on their roles as grassroots motivators, responsible for spreading awareness about various self-employment schemes and facilitating youth engagement at the village/ward level. The training session emphasized the importance of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for monitoring the effectiveness of the initiative, ensuring that the Yuva DOOTs remain result-oriented in



their approach. At the outset, detailed insights from the Baseline survey, conducted earlier to identify youth with entrepreneurial potential were presented by CCO, DE&CC Kulgam enabling the Yuva DOOTs to understand the scope and focus areas of their intervention. The training covered all relevant parameters including mobilization techniques, scheme benefits, documentation and reporting formats. Kulgam encouraged the Yuva DOOTs to

act as catalysts of change and assured them of full administrative support in overcoming challenges, if any in the field. He underlined the importance of youth-led development and community participation in building a robust entrepreneurial ecosystem in the district. The interactive sessions held during the training fostered active discussions and allowed the DOOTs to seek clarifications and share suggestions. With a clear action plan and thorough orientation, the YUVA

DOOTs are now well-prepared to begin outreach activities in their designated areas and play a pivotal role in nurturing entrepreneurship under Mission YUVA. Resource persons including DDM NABARD, Nodal Officer JKEDI, LDM Kulgam and Career Counselling Officer, DE&CC Kulgam provided detailed information/sector-specific guidance through Power Point Presentations & live demonstration of the Mission YUVA APP/ Portal. BHD chairperson's, ACP Kulgam and SDM Noorabad also interacted with Yuva DOOTs and shared their valuable expertise. At the outset, detailed insights from the Baseline survey, conducted earlier to identify youth with entrepreneurial potential were presented by CCO, DE&CC Kulgam enabling the Yuva DOOTs to understand the scope and focus areas of their intervention. The training covered all relevant parameters including mobilization techniques, scheme benefits, documentation and reporting formats. Kulgam encouraged the Yuva DOOTs to act as catalysts of change and assured them of full administrative support in overcoming challenges, if any in the field. He underlined the importance of youth-led development and community participation in building.

Under Trial Review Committee meeting held at Pulwama

■ HT News Network

PULWAMA, APRIL 18: In compliance with the directions of NALSA and JK Legal Services Authority UT of J&K, 2nd Under-Trial Review Committee meeting was held today at the Circuit House Pulwama. The meeting was presided over by Pr. District and Sessions Judge Pulwama and was attended by Deputy Commissioner Pulwama, DPO Pulwama, Sessions Judge Pulwama, Secretary DLSA, Sr. Prosecution Officer, Superintendent of District Jail Pulwama and Chief LADC Pulwama. During the meeting, the list of Under trial prisoners furnished by the concerned authorities was taken up for consideration. A total of 05 cases were taken up and discussed, out of which 03 cases were recommended for consideration by the committee as per the guidelines.

Inter-School Chess, Carrom & Yoga competitions continue across Baramulla

■ HT News Network

BARAMULLA, APRIL 18: Department of Youth Services and Sports, Baramulla, is continuously organizing inter-school chess and carrom competitions across various educational zones of the district. As part of the series, Zone Baramulla today kick-started the Inter-School Chess Competition for Under-14 boys at Boys Higher Secondary School Baramulla. A total of 50 students from different schools of the zone took part in the event. The winners were awarded with certificates in recognition of their talent and performance. Similarly, Zone Fatehgarh conducted an Inter-School Chess Competition for Under-14 boys, witnessing the participation of 60 students from various schools. The event aimed to promote strategic thinking and concentration among young learners. Zone Dangiwa successfully held Inter-School Chess Competitions for Under-14 and Under-17 girls. A total of 12 girls in the Under-14 category and 7 girls in the Under-17 category showcased their skills on the chessboard. Zone Chandoosa also organized Inter-School Chess Competitions for Under-14 and Under-17 boys and girls. Around 45 students participated in the competitions, highlighting the enthusiasm of students for indoor mind sports. On the second day of competitions, Zone Singpora Kalan hosted Chess Competitions for Under-14 and Under-17 girls at High School Singpora Kalan, providing a platform for young girls to explore and sharpen their intellectual abilities. Zone Uri marked its second day with the successful organization of Inter-School Chess and Carrom Competitions for Under-14 girls at Boys Higher Secondary School Uri. The event witnessed active participation and encouraged sportsmanship among the young girls of the region. Meanwhile, Zone Wagoora successfully concluded its Inter-School Chess Competitions for Under-14 and Under-17 boys and girls at High School Watergam. Winners were felicitated with certificates as a token of appreciation and encouragement.





Principal Secretary inaugurates 5 day photo exhibition at Kala Kendra, Jammu

HT News Network

JAMMU, APRIL 18: A five day photo exhibition titled "Trinity: A Group Show" featuring the works of five leading photographers begin today at Kala Kendra, Jammu.

The exhibition is being jointly organised by Kala Kendra Jammu and Aperture, the Jammu Photography Club, in the cherished memory of Chandan Bhadram Shastri, a legendary figure in the field of photography.

The exhibition showcased 45 exceptional works by renowned photographers; Chandan Sunder, Mohammad Anwar Al Nasir, Shishupal, Professor Ashok Kumar and Amarjeet Singh Jandhu, reflecting the diverse themes, artistic perspectives and technical brilliance.

Principal Secretary, Culture, BMSharma inaugurated the exhibition.

Dr. Javaid Rahi, Secretary, Kala Kendra



Jammu; R.K. Goyal, President, Aperture, the Photography Club and Professor Ashok Kumar graced the presidium.

Addressing the gathering, the Principal Secretary expressed deep appreciation for the powerful and evocative photographs on display. He commended the participating photographers for capturing

the moments that reflect emotion, culture and storytelling through their lenses.

He also announced several cultural initiatives by the Department of Culture, including a new Cultural Award scheme to honour the contributions of photographers, painters, sculptors, authors and

researchers. He also revealed plans to establish a dedicated Photography Gallery on the first floor of Kala Kendra, envisioned as a permanent platform for photographers to showcase their creativity. In his welcome address, Mohammad Anwar Al Nasir introduced the concept behind "The Trinity: A Group Show". He highlighted the ongoing efforts and initiatives of Aperture in promoting photography as an art form in the region.

Dr. Javaid Rahi, in his remarks, stated that the main objective of the exhibition is to encourage amateur photographers and enthusiasts to learn and grow through such curated experiences. He informed that live demonstrations on camera handling, framing angles, image mixing and creative compositions would be held during the exhibition, offering valuable learning for the photography lovers.

On the occasion, Aperture honoured several eminent photographers for their significant contribution.

DDC Chairman felicitates meritorious students of PM Shri GHSS Barolla

HT News Network

UDHAMPUR, APRIL 18: An impressive felicitation ceremony was organized at PM Shri Government Higher Secondary School Barolla to honour the achievements of meritorious students in academics, sports and co-curricular activities.

District Development Council Chairman Udhampur Lal Chand graced the occasion as the chief guest, while Joint Director of School Education, Udhampur-Reasi Range, Derender Sharma; Chief Education Officer, Udhampur, K K Badyal, Principal of the host school, Pratibha Gupta, staff members and students were also present at the event. The highlight of the ceremony was the felicitation of outstanding students who had showcased exceptional performance in academics as well as sports and games at various levels.

Speaking on the occasion, Chairman DDC Lal Chand lauded the efforts of the school administration, students, and teachers for their dedication and hard work. He emphasized the importance of holistic education that nurtures both intellect and physical well-being.

Training program for YUVA Doots inaugurated at Samba

HT News Network



SAMBA, APRIL 18: The District Administration Samba today commenced a comprehensive training programme for YUVA Doots under Mission YUVA. The inaugural ceremony was presided over by Deputy Commissioner Rajesh Sharma in the Conference Hall of the Administrative Complex Nandani Hills. In his inaugural address, the Deputy Commissioner emphasized the strategic importance of Mission YUVA in strengthening youth engagement at the grassroots level. The Deputy Commissioner directed the YUVA Doots and Motivators to ensure rigorous implementation of the initiative across all panchayats within the district. Additional District Development Commissioner, Champa Devi Thakur, addressed the gathering and exhorted the participants to utilize the training programme to acquire comprehensive understanding of Mission YUVA's objectives and methodologies. She highlighted the instrumental role of youth participation in advancing developmental initiatives. The training programme, organized under the auspices of the Office of the Assistant Director, Employment, Samba, featured detailed presentations from distinguished guest faculty representing various departments, including the

Orientation program for YUVA DOOTS held at Rajouri

HT News Network

RAJOURI, APRIL 18: A day-long training-cum-orientation program for Yuva Doots was successfully organized today by District Employment & Counselling Centre Rajouri here on the ITI campus. The programme was held for training and capacity building of YUVA DOOTS under the directions of District Development Commissioner Abhishek Sharma. The inaugural session was chaired by (Nodal Officer)-Mission Yuva, Additional District Development Commissioner Dr Raj Kumar Thappa. The programme was organized under the supervision of Assistant Director, District Employment & Counselling Centre Pradyot Gupta. In the inaugural address, Dr Raj Kumar Thappa sensitized the Yuva Doots about their role and responsibilities under Mission YUVA. He said that Mission Yuva is an ambitious initiative to promote entrepreneurship and self-employment among the youth of Jammu and Kashmir. He encouraged the YUVA DOOTS to act as catalysts of change and assured them of full administrative support in overcoming challenges in the field. He underlined the importance of youth-led development and community participation in building a robust entrepreneurial ecosystem in the district.

Dogra Art Museum celebrates World Heritage Day

HT News Network

JAMMU, APRIL 18: Department of Archives, Archaeology and Museums, Jammu and Kashmir celebrated World Heritage Day 2025 at Dogra Art Museum, Mubarak Mandi.

From the Year 1983, as declared by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), 18th April has been celebrated as World Heritage Day across the world.

The heritage day is observed to celebrate the diversity of our cultural heritage and the efforts required for the preservation of our tangible and intangible heritage. The theme of this year was "Heritage under Threat from Disasters and Conflicts".

Dogra Art Museum has organized a special exhibition of Miniature Paintings of Jammu School for the event. A powerpoint presentation on various monuments of Jammu division was also shown to the visitors and students as a special attraction to the event.

The event started with the lighting of the Traditional Lamp by Member Legislative Assembly Jammu East Yudhveer Sethi and Curator Dogra Art Museum Jammu Mukul Magotra.

While appreciating the efforts of the Department for organizing the event, the MLA applauded the role of Director Archives, Archaeology and Museums, J&K Kuldeep Krishan Sidha and his team for the success of the event.

The Department has also organized special events at various historical places viz. Samba Fort, Hari Parbat Fort, S.P.S. Museum, Srinagar, etc. The schools and colleges of Jammu have been invited to come to the Museum for familiarization and awareness about Dogra Art and Culture. A number of schools visited the Museum where they have shown keen interest in craft, objects and artefacts which are on display inside the Museum.

DC Kathua reviews summer preparedness Seeks coordinated efforts to tackle water, power challenges

HT News Network

KATHUA, APRIL 18: In light of the intensifying heat wave conditions, Deputy Commissioner Dr. Rakesh Minhas today chaired a crucial meeting to assess the preparation of departments to meet the challenges of summer season, with a focus on provisions made for adequate water and power supply in the district.

At the outset, the DC underlined the need for meticulous planning and coordinated execution to effectively meet the enhanced demand of water and electricity during the summer season. He emphasized the importance of proactive measures to minimize public inconvenience amid soaring temperatures.

A detailed sub-division-wise review of water and power supply was conducted, with special attention given to areas identified as vulnerable due to prevailing weather patterns. Officials were directed to flag and prioritize



critical areas for immediate intervention.

The meeting was informed that water levels in the Ranjit Sagar Dam Lake are comparatively low this season, which could affect the drinking water supply in Basohli and adjoining regions. Besides, the DC took stock of the water-deficit conditions in the kandi belt and hilly terrains of the district.

To bridge the supply gaps, it was

decided that water tankers and trollies would be deployed in the vulnerable areas based on local requirements, ensuring timely delivery of drinking water. The DC was also briefed about the progress under the Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM), with over 10 schemes set to be commissioned by the end of this month, bringing much-needed relief to water-stressed regions.

In a citizen-centric move, Dr.

Minhas announced the establishment of a 24x7 Combined Control Room/ Helpline. The facility will serve as a unified platform for residents to register complaints related to water and electricity supply, as well as report forest fire incidents.

Besides, the DC directed the Executive Engineer Ground Water to prioritize the repair of non-functional hand pumps to augment local water accessibility.

The DFOs of all Forest Ranges were directed to remain vigilant and proactive in responding to forest fire incidents. To support the watering of plantations under Social Forestry, the XEN PHE was instructed to ensure timely water supply through tankers and Trolleys.

Executive Engineer PDD was also directed to ensure round the clock availability of technical assistance in view of snag in power supply especially dedicated feeder set up for PHE Water Supply.

DDC reviews achievements of RDD Department, status of PMGSY Projects in Poonch District

HT News Network

POONCH, APRIL 18: District Development Commissioner Vikas Kundal today reviewed the physical and financial progress achieved under various developmental initiatives undertaken by the Rural Development Department (RDD), besides status of PMGSY projects here at two separate meetings.

The DDC evaluated progress of RDD initiatives including works under MGNREGA, construction of houses under PMAY-G, BDC/PRI/DDC Works, CD Panchayats works, SBM works, Panchayat Ghars and execution of Aspirational Block Development Plan. The RDD officials presented a comprehensive overview of ongoing projects via a PowerPoint presentation. DDC Kundal inquired about project execution, delays, compensation status, social audit reports, geotagging and payment statuses across all blocks in relation to the Mahatma



ma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA). He urged officers to enhance the execution of works under this vital act and directed the preparation of a line listing of pending cases under the Aadhar Based Payment System, ensuring no delays in ABPS across all blocks. The DDC also reviewed targeted work plans for the fiscal year 2025-26, instructing all Block Development Officers (BDOs) to initiate project execution promptly. He emphasized the need for improved physical performance under the convergence scheme.

Training Programme for YUVA DOOTS held at Ramban

HT News Network

RAMBAN, APRIL 18: A one-day training programme under Mission YUVA was today organized for Yuva Doots here at the District Administrative Complex under the guidance of Deputy Commissioner Baseer-Ul-Haq Chaudhary. The session was presided over by Additional District Development Commissioner (ADDC) Roshan Lal, who is also the District Nodal Officer for Mission YUVA.

The programme commenced with a welcome address by Assistant Director Employment, Ramban, Amit Kumar. The training featured insightful presentations and guidance from key speakers, including District Development Manager, NABARD, Arshi Sharma, Career Counseling Officer, Ramban, Amir Hassan; and District Nodal Officer, JKEDI, Tashneef Parray.

A total of 62 YUVA DOOTS, appointed by the District Administration for grassroots engagement, participated in the training along with officials from the District Employment and Counselling Centre (DECC), Ramban.

The training aimed to sensitize the YUVA DOOTS about their role and responsibilities under Mission YUVA, ensuring effective implementation at the Panchayat level.

The focus areas included youth engagement, career counseling, entrepreneurship development, and livelihood generation initiatives to empower rural youth in the District.

The programme concluded with an interactive session where participants exchanged ideas and discussed strategies to realize the objectives of Mission YUVA at the grassroots level.

Tejinder Singh discusses future strategy to intensify anti-drug campaign, strengthen grassroots engagement

HT News Network

Jammu, April 18: A significant meeting of the Youth National Conference (YNC) was held today under the chairmanship of Tejinder Pal Singh Aman, Provincial President of J&K YNC, to deliberate on the further course of action with respect to the ongoing anti-drug campaign and to enhance party activities at the grassroots level.

During the meeting, which witnessed the

enthusiastic participation of youth leaders and delegates from various districts, the pressing issue of drug abuse among youth was discussed in detail at Sher-e-Kashmir Bhavan, Jammu today.

The Provincial President YNC expressed grave concern over the rising menace of drugs in society and reiterated the need for collective, coordinated efforts to root out this evil. He emphasized that the Youth National Conference has a pivotal role to play in creating



ing awareness, supporting rehabilitation,

and building pressure on the administration to tighten enforcement mechanisms against drug peddlers.

He said that the YNC would soon launch a comprehensive anti-drug awareness campaign across colleges, universities, and rural belts of Jammu and Kashmir. "The youth are the real agents of change, and it is our responsibility to protect future generations from this growing threat," he said. He urged the cadre to conduct seminars, rallies, and inter-

active sessions involving students, parents, and community elders to generate mass awareness.

The Provincial President YNC also focused on the vital role of youth cadre in strengthening party activities at the grassroots level. It was unanimously resolved to activate youth committees in every panchayat, ward, and block to connect with people directly, understand local issues, and project the National Conference's progressive vision.





PM Modi speaks with Elon Musk, discusses immense potential of collaboration in tech, innovation

AGENCIES

NEW DELHI, APR 18 (UNI)

Prime Minister Narendra Modi today spoke with Tesla CEO Elon Musk and discussed various issues, including the immense potential for collaboration in the areas of technology and innovation.

In a post on X, the PM said:

“Spoke to @elonmusk and talked about various issues, including the topics we covered during our meeting in Washington DC earlier this year.

“We discussed the immense potential for collaboration in the areas of technology and innovation.

“India remains committed to advancing our partnerships with the US in these domains.”

The PM had met with Elon Musk and his children during his visit to Washington in February. The multi-billionaire Musk is very close to US President Donald Trump and heads the Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE).

The talks also come as major telecom operators, Reliance Jio and Bharti Airtel, signed separate deals with Musk's SpaceX last month to bring the Starlink internet service to the country.

Ukraine, US sign memorandum on minerals deal

AGENCIES

KIEV, APR 18 (UNI)

Ukraine and the United States signed a memorandum on minerals deal on Thursday, Ukraine's First Deputy Prime Minister and Economy Minister Yulia Svyrydenko said.

"Ukraine and the United States of America signed a Memorandum, which attests to the constructive collaboration of our teams and the intention to finalize and conclude an agreement that will benefit both our peoples," Svyrydenko wrote in a Facebook post.

According to the post, the document was signed by Svyrydenko in Kiev and U.S. Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent in Washington. Svyrydenko said the two countries will finalize the text of the minerals agreement and sign it in the near future, adding that the agreement will be subject to "ratification by parliaments."

Earlier on Thursday, U.S. President Donald Trump said the agreement could be signed next week.

Moscow int'l film festival kicks off in Russian capital

AGENCIES

MOSCOW, APR 18 (UNI)

The 47th Moscow International Film Festival (MIFF) opened Thursday in the Russian capital, with a dedicated BRICS film program featured among its lineup.

Running through April 24, the festival will showcase 200 films from 50 countries and regions, according to the organizing committee.

A BRICS film festival, held within the framework of the MIFF, will highlight cinematic works from BRICS member states, including China, Russia, India, Iran, Egypt, and others.

This year marks the 90th anniversary of the MIFF, which was first held in Moscow in 1935 and became regular since 1959. The main prize of the festival, Golden Saint George, is awarded for the best film of the competition program.

Death toll from US airstrikes on Yemeni oil port reaches 33: Health Ministry

AGENCIES

DOHA, APR 18 (UNI)

The death toll from US airstrikes on the Ras Isa oil port in Yemen's western province of Al Hudaydah has reached 33, and 80 people have been injured, the Houthi Health Ministry's directorate for Al Hudaydah said on Friday.

"According to preliminary data, the death toll as a result of US aggression at the Ras Isa oil facility has risen to 33, with 80 injured," the ministry was quoted as saying by the Almasirah broadcaster.

Most of the dead and injured are port workers and employees of port organisations, the report said. According to Al Hudaydah authorities, the United States carried out at least 14 strikes on the port.

On Thursday, the US Central Command (CENTCOM) said that the US military destroyed Houthi-controlled fuel port Ras Isa.

No power can direct President: Dhankhar

AGENCIES

NEW DELHI, APRIL 18 (UNI)

Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar on Thursday questioned the unlimited independence of the judiciary and said that no power can give any direction to the President of India on any grounds.

Addressing the probationers of the 6th batch of Rajya Sabha at the Vice President's residence, Dhankhar said that such a situation cannot be created in the country where one can give instructions to the President.

The role of the judiciary is advisory. "Consultation is not consent; consultation is only consultation," said Dhankhar.



The Vice President's statement assumes significance in the wake of a recent Supreme Court ruling that the President has to decide on bills sent for consideration within a maximum of three months.

Dhankhar said that the post of the President of India is supreme. The

President takes an oath to protect, preserve, and defend the Constitution. The oath is taken only by the President and the governors appointed by him. Everybody - Prime Minister, Vice President, Ministers, MPs, Judges - all of them take an oath to abide by the Constitution, he said.

Cong ministers also oppose caste survey: Vijayendra

AGENCIES

KALABURAGI, APR 18 (UNI)

Karnataka BJP President Vijayendra Yediyurappa on Friday accused the Siddaramaiah-led state government of conducting an "unscientific" caste survey, pointing out that several cabinet ministers within the ruling Congress party have openly opposed the findings, while some have denied making objections.

Speaking to reporters, Vijayendra demanded the immediate rejection of the controversial report, calling it unreliable, politically motivated, and divisive. "Several cabinet ministers have opposed this report," he said, emphasising the lack of consensus within the government itself.

Vijayendra also high-



lighted the widespread dissent the caste survey has sparked among both the government and the public.

"Communities, including the Jain community and Other Backward Classes (OBC), have raised objections to the figures. In fact, every community is contradicting the numbers shown in the report," he added.

The BJP leader further alleged that despite the state government spending over Rs 150 crore on the survey, no enumerators visited people's homes to collect data. "There is no clarity from the Chief Minister on how the government arrived at its conclusions. The state government proceeded without a proper methodology," Vijayendra said.

Stalin flays Centre, not even Amit Shah, any Shah cannot rule TN

AGENCIES

CHENNAI, APR 18 (UNI)

Upping his ante against the BJP government at the Centre for ignoring.

Tamil Nadu's interests on various fronts, Chief Minister and DMK President M K Stalin on Saturday asserted that not only Union Home Minister Amit Shah, any Shah could not rule the state.

Speaking after launching Rs 418.15 crore 6,760 completed projects, laying the foundation stone for 7,369 new projects worth Rs 390 crores and distributing welfare measures worth Rs 357.43 crores

to 2,02,531 beneficiaries at an official function at Andarkuppam village in Chennai's Northern



suburb of Ponneri in neighbouring Tiruvallur district, he said the Tamil soil had never allowed domination and encroachment of state's rights.

Coming down heavily on the Centre, including Mr Amit Shah and Prime Minister Narendra Modi, he said "with the elections just a year away, we are well aware of the threats to be unleashed by your agencies...People

of the country are also well aware of this", he said.

"We are not slaves to be intimidated by such threats and become subservient. Not only Amit Shah, any Shah can't rule here (TN)", Mr Stalin declared.

"This is Tamil Nadu...as along of Muthuvel Karunanidhi Stalin is there, your plans will not come true", he thundered.w

Sri Lanka turns down land connectivity project with India: Report

AGENCIES

COLOMBO/NEW DELHI, APR 18 (UNI)

Sri Lanka has turned down India's proposal for the construction of a land connectivity project linking the two countries via road and rail-bridge, stating that it was not yet ready for land connectivity, a media report said.

The proposal was raised by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in his meeting with Sri Lankan President Anura Kumara Dissanayake, when the two met in Colombo earlier this month, the Daily Mirror reported.

The proposal which was mentioned by New Delhi last year in December too during President Dissanayake's visit was



turned down, deeming it unfeasible. During their latest meeting in April, the issue was not part of the discussions, the daily said.

Still, on one occasion during the recent bilateral talks, Prime Minister Modi, referred to the importance of land connectivity between the two countries and the many advantages it

could bring.

A land bridge connecting the two countries was mooted first during the 2002/2004 government led by Ranil Wickremesinghe as the then Prime Minister. The land connectivity project was also mentioned in a joint statement by PM Wickremesinghe's visit to New Delhi as the President in 2023.

Defence Secretary wraps up UK visit; discusses on strengthening military ties

AGENCIES

NEW DELHI, APR 18 (UNI)

Defence Secretary Rajesh Kumar Singh concluded his visit to London during which he co-chaired the 24th India-UK Defence Consultative Group meeting and also participated at the India-UK Defence Industry Roundtable.

During his visit from April 16-17, the Defence Secretary co-chaired the 24th India-UK Defence Consultative Group meeting with David Williams, Permanent Under Secretary of State for Defence, a Defence Ministry statement said.

Both sides reviewed the evolving regional and global geopolitical landscape and reaffirmed their shared commitment



to deepening defence ties. The discussions were held in the context of the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership announced in 2021 and the roadmap to 2030, which continues to steer cooperation between the two nations.

The Defence Secre-

tary also interacted with the UK's National Security Adviser, Jonathan Powell, with talks focused on expanding tri-service military engagements and strengthening collaboration between the two countries' defence industries.

FBI arrests Indian national wanted for multiple terror attacks in Punjab

AGENCIES

WASHINGTON/NEW DELHI, APR 18 (UNI)

The US Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) announced that it has arrested Harpreet Singh, wanted in India for multiple terror attacks in Punjab. He has links with Pakistan's ISI and Khalistani terror group Babbar Khalsa International (BKI).

The FBI in a social media post said:

"Today, Harpreet Singh, an alleged terrorist responsible for terror attacks in Punjab, India, was arrested by the FBI & ERO in Sacramento.

"Linked to two international terrorist groups, he entered the U.S. illegally and used burner phones to evade capture."



The FBI said that "Agents from the FBI's Legal Attaché office in New Delhi, informed Sacramento that Singh was wanted in connection with multiple terror attacks across Punjab, India.

"Singh is suspected to have collaborated with Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) and the Khalistani terrorist group Babbar Khalsa International (BKI).

"He had been evading capture by using untrace-

able burner phones and encrypted applications. This case reinforces the importance of international cooperation in apprehending those who threaten global security."

According to reports, Harpreet Singh, alias Happy Passia, is believed to be responsible for 14 grenade attacks over the last six months in Punjab.

Passia is in the custody of Immigration and Customs Enforcement in the US.

Raj Thackeray hardens stance against Hindi in school curriculum

AGENCIES

MUMBAI APRIL 18 (UNI)

The language controversy has come to the forefront in Maharashtra politics though the state has decided to implement the National Education Policy making Hindi a compulsory third language from standard I-V in Marathi and English medium schools in the state.

Currently, only Marathi and English are being taught as mandatory lan-

guages from Classes 1 to 4 in these schools.

Prominent politicians have spoken out against "foisting" of Hindi in the state with Raj Thackeray of MNS being the latest one to threaten a state-wide agitation.

The state's curriculum planning steering committee had earlier recommended options other than Hindi from the first grade. However, many politicians have alleged that the Education Depart-



ment has ignored the recommendation and has forced Hindi on the state.

Raj Thackeray has voiced his strong oppo-

sition to the education department's decision in a podcast anchored by actor, producer-director Mahesh Manjrekar.

"We need our people who are in government ...and look at the Marathi language issue. Merely celebrating the language day or getting the status of a classical language will not lead to the promotion of Marathi language," said the MNS chief.

"If development means turning a blind eye to the existence of Marathi people, we do not want it. The flyovers being built today look great, but if this is ending the existence of

Marathi people, we do not want such development," he added.

The Centre's National Education Policy envisages a three-language formula. According to it, Hindi is introduced as a subject from class 1 in the state.

"The government is trying to create a Marathi-Marathi conflict in the upcoming municipal elections, which the MNS will never tolerate," said Raj Thackeray.

CRISPR tech finds key genes behind Parkinson’s disease

AGENCIES NEW DELHI

US researchers have used modern technology CRISPR interference to identify a new set of genes that contribute to the risk of Parkinson's disease. More than 10 million people worldwide are living with Parkinson's disease. It is the second-most common neurodegenerative disease after Alzheimer's disease. Researchers have long been investigating why some people carrying pathogenic variants go on to develop Parkinson's, while others who also carry such variants do not. The prevailing theory has suggested additional genetic factors may play a role. The study, published in the journal Science, identifies a new set of genes and cellular pathway that play



a role in the risk of developing Parkinson's disease. The scientists from Northwestern University searched the entire human genome using CRISPR interference technology. They discovered that a group of 16 proteins, called Commander, comes together to play a previously unrecognised role in delivering specific proteins to the lysosome -- a part of the cell that acts

like a recycling centre -- breaking down waste materials, old cell parts and other unwanted substances. "Our study reveals that a combination of genetic factors plays a role in the manifestation of diseases like Parkinson's disease, which means that therapeutic targeting of several key pathways will have to be considered for such disorders," said Dr. Dimi-

Parasitic infection may trigger cancer in cervix after treatment: Study

AGENCIES NEW DELHI

New research has revealed that Schistosoma haematobium (S. haematobium), a parasitic infection affecting millions globally, can trigger cancer-related gene activity in the cervical lining, with changes becoming even more pronounced after treatment. Presented at the 'ESCMID Global 2025' in Austria, this pivotal study sheds new light on how this often-overlooked parasitic disease may contribute to cervical cancer risk at the molecular level. Certain cancer-related biological pathways became more active post-treatment, particularly those involved in inflammation, tissue remodeling and the breakdown of protective barriers in the cervix. These changes were linked to increased blood vessel formation, activation of tumour-related



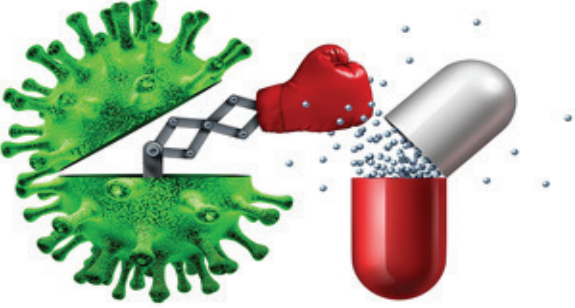
processes, and reduced programmed cell death (apoptosis)—a key mechanism for eliminating abnormal cells. "The findings suggest that infection may trigger molecular changes that make women more vulnerable to cancer-related processes in the cervix, especially after treatment," explained Dr. Anna Maria Mertelsmann, lead study author. One particularly concerning observation was the downregulation of genes responsible for

treatment and highlights the need for careful post-treatment monitoring." This study, published in the journal BEYOND, serves as an important first step in understanding the role of S. haematobium in cervical cancer, and a larger study following 180 women over 12 months is currently underway to confirm these findings. Future research will also explore whether women who have had schistosomiasis are at greater risk of cervical cancer due to long-term HPV infections. Researchers stress the need for greater awareness of Female Genital Schistosomiasis (FGS), as many women with S. haematobium are also affected by this difficult-to-diagnose condition. "Women diagnosed with S. haematobium should be closely monitored for early signs of cervical tissue abnormalities," she emphasised.

AMR-related infections killed over 3 million children globally in 2022: Study

AGENCIES NEW DELHI

More than three million children worldwide lost their lives in 2022 due to antimicrobial resistance (AMR)-related infections, a new landmark study has revealed. The study, presented today at 'ESCMID Global 2025' event in Vienna, Austria, underscores the urgent need for both regional and global strategies to control paediatric AMR, particularly in high-burden areas such as South-East Asia and Africa. AMR poses a critical threat to children, who are highly vulnerable to infections. Access to new antibiotic formulations is often much more limited for children because of product development delays. The study data found that in 2022 alone, more than 752,000 children in Southeast Asia and



659,000 children in Africa died of AMR-associated complications. Many of these deaths were linked to the use of Watch antibiotics (drugs with a high risk of resistance) and Reserve antibiotics (last-resort treatments for severe, multi-drug-resistant infections). According to researchers, Watch and Reserve antibiotics are not intended for first-line treatment and their use should be limited only for those who need them to preserve their effectiveness and reduce the development of resistance. In contrast, Access

"While the rise in use of Watch and Reserve antibiotics may be necessary in response to the concurrent rise in drug-resistant infections, the sharp rise in use of these drugs presents several serious long-term risks", commented Professor Joseph Harwell, study co-author. "Their increased use, especially without careful oversight, elevates the risk of resistance and limits future treatment options. If bacteria develop resistance to these antibiotics, there will be few, if any, alternatives for treating multidrug-resistance infections, Harwell noted. Several factors contribute to the severity of AMR in low- and middle-income countries, including overcrowded hospitals, poor sanitation, and weak infection prevention measures that facilitate the spread of resistant pathogens within healthcare settings and communities.

This drug may result in weight loss for 3 years in adults without diabetes

AGENCIES NEW DELHI

Taking tirzepatide drug once a week may produce clinically meaningful and sustained weight loss for at least 3 years in adults with overweight or obesity who do not have diabetes, according to new research. The findings also indicate that females and those without obesity-related complications may be more responsive to tirzepatide treatment, said researchers at the European Congress on Obesity (ECO) in Malaga, Spain. The study, led by Dr Luca Busetto from the University of Padova in Italy and colleagues from Eli Lilly and Company that manufacture tirzepatide, is a continuation of the SURMOUNT-1 phase 3 trial of tirzepatide, a medication approved in the EU and USA for obesity and type 2 diabetes treatment.



The trial uncovered no new safety issues; the most common side effects were nausea, diarrhoea and constipation. "Our long-term analysis of tirzepatide establishes that clinically relevant weight loss can be sustained for up to 3 years in a diverse population of adults with overweight or obesity but not diabetes, regardless of age, BMI, and duration of obesity at the outset of the study", said

hormones that are naturally secreted by the gut after a meal, which stimulates insulin secretion. It also reduces appetite by slowing down the time it takes the stomach to empty and interacting with areas in the brain harbouring GLP-1 receptors to signal fullness or satiety. Tirzepatide was approved in November 2023 by the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) (Zepbound) and in the EU in June 2024 (Mounjaro) for weight management in adults with obesity or overweight with at least one weight-related condition (such as high blood pressure, type 2 diabetes or high cholesterol). The findings could provide deeper insights into the efficacy of tirzepatide across different demographics and medical histories, potentially allowing for more individualised treatment plans and goals, said the team.

FDI in India’s pharma sector crosses Rs 19,134 crore during 2024-25

AGENCIES NEW DELHI

India's pharmaceuticals and medical devices sector has seen a FDI inflow to the tune of Rs 11,888 crore from April to December in the financial year ended on March 31, 2025, apart from which 13 FDI proposals worth Rs 7,246.40 crore for brown-field projects during 2024-25 have been approved, taking the total FDI to Rs 19,134.4 crore, according to figures compiled by the Department of Pharmaceuticals. The government's Production Linked Incentive (PLI) Scheme, has turned out to be a transformative initiative for boosting domestic manufacturing, attracting investments, reducing reliance on imports and increasing exports, according to an official statement issued on Sunday. One of the significant achievements under the



PLI scheme has been the surpassing of targeted investments. While the initial commitment was Rs 3,938.57 crore, the actual realised investment has already reached Rs 4,253.92 crore (as of December 2024), the statement said. Under the PLI scheme for Bulk Drugs, a total of 48 projects have been selected under the scheme, of which 34 projects have been commissioned for 25 bulk drugs as of December 2024. Notable Projects Under the PLI Scheme for Bulk

2021, with a financial outlay of Rs 15,000 crore and the production tenure from FY 2022-2023 to FY 2027-28, and provides financial incentive to 55 selected applicants for manufacturing of identified products under three categories for a period of six years. Under this scheme, high-value pharmaceutical products such as patented/off-patented drugs, biopharmaceuticals, complex generics, anti-cancer drugs, and auto-immune drugs, among others, are manufactured. For pharmaceuticals, the initiative aims to reduce import dependence on Key Starting Materials (KSMs), Drug Intermediates (DIs), and Active Pharmaceutical Ingredients (APIs), strengthening India's manufacturing base. By promoting production and innovation, it boosts domestic capabilities and global competitiveness.

New image-driven model for hand gesture recognition developed

AGENCIES NEW DELHI

Scientists on Sunday said they have presented a novel channel-wise cumulative spike train image-driven model for hand gesture recognition. The research paper, published in the journal Cyborg and Bionic Systems, leverage a custom convolutional neural network (CNN) to extract both local and global features for classifying hand gestures, by decomposing high-density surface EMG (HD-sEMG) signals into channel-wise cumulative spike trains (cw-CSTs) and reconstructing these into two-dimensional images based on the spatial layout of the electrodes. The research paper was prepared by scientists at Shanghai Jiao Tong University in China. Gesture recognition, as a natural human-computer interaction method, has broad application



prospects in fields such as prosthetic control, rehabilitation training, and mixed reality. The commonly used surface electromyography (sEMG) signal analysis methods, such as those based on time-frequency domain features (such as

RMS), often only capture rough neural control information, are susceptible to noise interference, and ignore the inherent spatial distribution characteristics of muscle movement. "With the development of high-density surface electromyography (HD sEMG) technology, the discharge sequences (Spike Trains) of motor units (MUs) obtained through decomposition can more directly reflect the neural system's control over muscles, providing more representative low dimensional neural control information for gesture recognition," said Yang Yu, a researcher at Shanghai Jiao Tong University. The research process of this paper is divided into the following steps: Firstly, the HD-sEMG electrode array is used to collect the electrical signals of the forearm muscles, and the signals are filtered, denoised, and abnormal channels are removed.

Then, using an algorithm based on spatial propagation characteristics, the cumulative discharge sequence of each channel (cw-CST), is decomposed from the HD-sEMG signal to reflect the activity of adjacent motion units. Next, the cw-CST data of each channel is reconstructed into a two-dimensional image (cw-CST image) based on the spatial distribution of electrodes to capture the spatial activation patterns of neural control. Finally, a customised convolutional neural network is designed and trained for hand gesture recognition. "Our study provides a novel and effective solution for high-precision gesture recognition, with the potential for widespread application in human-computer interaction fields such as prosthetic control and rehabilitation training," said Yu.



Streaking Capitals face Titan test in IPL clash

AGENCIES

AHMEDABAD, APR 18 (UND)

Delhi Capitals, who sit atop the standings with 10 points from six matches, have shown remarkable consistency and resilience, registering five consecutive victories – the most recent being a thrilling Super Over win against Rajasthan Royals.

DC now head into a crucial day clash against Gujarat Titans at the Narendra Modi Stadium on Saturday, aiming to tighten their grip on the top spot in the ongoing Indian Premier League (IPL) 2025 season. DC's resurgence this season has been marked by their ability to close out tight matches and deliver under pressure. Their campaign began with a dramatic one-wicket win over Lucknow Super Giants, where they were reeling at 113/6 chasing a steep target, only to be rescued by a sensational 66* off 31 balls from Ashutosh Sharma – a knock that has become symbolic of their never-say-die spirit.

Since then, Delhi have stitched together victories against formidable opponents, including Chennai Super Kings and Royal Challengers Bengaluru. Their most recent triumph came in a high-octane Super Over thriller against Rajasthan Royals, where Mitchell Starc held his nerve to seal the win after the scores were tied at the end of regular play. Starc's bowling, com-



bined with Kuldeep Yadav's middle-over control, has been instrumental in Delhi's march.

With a strong core of experienced campaigners and new additions clicking, Delhi's balance looks impeccable. KL Rahul has been the standout performer with the bat, scoring consistently including a brilliant 93* against RCB and 77 against CSK. His return to form and strategic value as a senior opener has brought stability to the top order.

Led by Axar Patel and bolstered by the form of youngsters like Jake Fraser-McGurk and Abishek Porel, Delhi's batting depth has ensured they can withstand early blows and still post or chase competitive totals.

On the other hand, Gujarat come into the contest placed second on the points table, with four wins and two losses. After a defeat to Punjab Kings in their opener, GT hit their stride with four straight wins before their streak was halted by LSG in their previous outing.

Sai Sudharsan has been a revelation at the top for GT, amassing 329 runs in six games – placing him among the tournament's leading run-scorers. The Tamil Nadu southpaw has consistently provided strong starts, while Shubman Gill and Jos Buttler have offered solidity and flair.

Gujarat's bowling has looked sharp with Mohammed Siraj spearheading the pace attack with 10 wickets, including a standout 3/19 spell against RCB. Supporting him are Prasidh Krishna and Sai Kishore, who have taken a combined 20 wickets and maintained pressure in the middle and death overs. However, Rashid Khan's subdued impact so far – with just four wickets – is a concern Gujarat will hope to address quickly.

Statistically, Delhi hold a slight edge in recent meetings, having won three of their last five encounters against Gujarat. Their last clash saw DC eke out a narrow four-run victory, further fuelling the anticipation for this contest.

The Narendra Modi Stadium has seen high-scoring encounters this season, with all three games at the venue won by teams batting first. Punjab Kings' mammoth 243 remains the highest total recorded here this season. The surface offers bounce for pacers and grip for spinners, but once batsmen get set, strokeplay becomes easier.

With the temperature expected to touch 42°C and no rain forecast, dew may play a role in the second innings, though early dryness could tilt the decision towards batting first.

With both teams showing tremendous form and tactical depth, Saturday's contest promises fireworks. Delhi's winning momentum and star performers make them slight favourites, but Gujarat's balanced squad and home advantage could make this a thrilling, neck-and-neck battle.

Probable XIs: Gujarat Titans: Sai Sudharsan, Shubman Gill (c), Jos Buttler (wk), Washington Sundar, Sherfane Rutherdorf, Shahrukh Khan, Rahul Tewatia, Arshad Khan, Rashid Khan, R Sai Kishore, Mohammed Siraj

Delhi Capitals: Jake Fraser-McGurk, Abishek Porel, Karun Nair, KL Rahul (wk), Axar Patel (c), Tristan Stubbs, Ashutosh Sharma, Vipraj Nigam, Mitchell Starc, Kuldeep Yadav, Mohit Sharma

Fatima backs Pakistan to stay unbeaten after Thailand win

AGENCIES

LAHORE, APR 18 (UND)

Pakistan's dominant 87-run victory over Thailand secured their qualification for the ICC Women's Cricket World Cup 2025, set to be held later this year in India.

The team has remained unbeaten throughout the qualifiers, and with just one match left, skipper Fatima Sana is hopeful of finishing the tournament unbeaten.

"We have qualified, and the main credit goes to our team – they supported me a lot and gave me the opportunity to captain this side," said Fatima Sana after the match on Thursday.

"Hopefully, we will try to win the final match as well and aim to remain unbeaten throughout the



qualifiers, finishing at the top of the table," she said.

Pakistan had a slow start to their innings while batting first, but a resilient knock from Sidra Amin and solid lower-order hitting by Fatima Sana helped them post a total of 205/6, an ICC report said.

"Before the 40 overs, we were under a lot of pressure because the Thailand team bowled really well against our batting lineup," said Fatima Sana.

"But after the 40th over, we started to see opportunities. I got a few chances to contribute with the bat, and Sidra Ameen played really well during that phase," she said.

"The main thing is that she stayed at the crease and kept the innings going," Sana said.

"I know people might have thought the run rate was a bit slow, but she played sensibly when we were just trying to sur-

vive. The way she stayed on the ground and held the innings together was really important for us," she said.

The skipper then went onto lead from the front with the ball, joining forces with Nashra Sandhu and Rameen Shamim. The trio picked up three wickets each, sealing a convincing victory and securing qualification for the Qualifier hosts.

With this win, Pakistan have secured victory in all four of their matches in the tournament.

Pakistan will now face Bangladesh in their final match of the tournament on April 19 at the Lahore City Cricket Association Ground, where the Nigar Sultana Joty-led side will be aiming to secure their own qualification to the marquee event in India later this year.

CSK: Gurjapneet Singh ruled out of IPL 2025, Dewald Brevis announced as replacement

AGENCIES

CHENNAI, APR 18 (UND)

Chennai Super Kings fast bowler Gurjapneet Singh has been ruled out of the remainder of IPL 2025 due to an injury.

South African Dewald Brevis has been announced as his replacement.



Brevis has featured in 81 T20 matches and has scored close to 2000 runs at a strike rate of almost 145.

The 21-year-old has featured in several T20 leagues like the Major League Cricket, the SA20 and even the IPL before.

Chennai Super Kings wishes Gurjapneet Singh a speedy recovery.

Pakistan into the World Cup, West Indies keep fighting

AGENCIES

LAHORE, APR 18 (UND)

West Indies kept themselves in contention for an ICC Women's Cricket World Cup 2025 spot with a win over Bangladesh, whereas Pakistan confirmed their place after overcoming Thailand.

Batting first in Lahore, Pakistan got off to a below-par start after top-order batters Shawaal Zulfiqar (6), Muneeba Ali (18), and Aliya Riaz (7) failed to make a significant impact at the start of the innings, leaving them tottering at 47/3 at the brink of the 20th over.

Sidra Amin's resilience joined hands with Pakistan skipper Fatima Sana's intent, and the duo stitched together 97 runs after taking over from 85/4. Amin helped herself to a well-made 80 off 105, which included nine boundaries to get Pakistan back on their feet.

Skipper Sana also pitched in with a crucial unbeaten 62 off 59 - a knock that included six fours and a maximum - to get Pakistan past the 200-run mark.

Thipatcha Putthawong's two-wicket haul, combined with a wicket apiece from Onnichia Kamchomphu and Phannita Maya meant that the hosts ended their innings at 205/6, leaving Thailand needing 206 to grab their first win of the Qualifier.

And despite an early stutter, the loss of Chan-



ida Sutthiruang for just five runs, Thailand made a positive start in the chase, adding 44 runs in the first powerplay.

However, Fatima Sana got Nattaya Boochatham to edge one behind the wicket, while Nannapat Koncharoenkai was clean bowled by Rameen Shamim in a space of three deliveries. Pakistan took control thereafter, and didn't allow any of the Thailand batters to settle by getting regular breakthroughs.

The Pakistan spinners took the lead, and were the pick of the bowling effort in the middle overs. Nashra Sandhu (3/19) and Shamim (3/18) shared six wickets between them.

Resilient West Indies overcame Bangladesh by three wickets to keep their ICC Women's Cricket World Cup 2025 dreams alive in a tight contest in Lahore.

Chasing 228 for a win, an unbeaten half-century from Chinelle Henry (51 not out) pulled off the job for West Indies after Bangladesh looked all set to rack up their fourth-straight win and punch

their ticket to the Women's ICC event in India this year.

Opting to bat in Lahore, Bangladesh were dealt an early blow after Chinelle Henry struck to remove Sobhana Mostary, caught behind.

Sharmin Akhter and Fargana Hoque steadied the ship with a solid 118-run stand, before the latter was caught & bowled by Aaliyah Alleyne.

The pacer struck again two balls later with a peach of a delivery ripping through Sharmin Akhter's stumps to put an end to her 79-ball 67-run knock. The right-hand batter's knock included 10 fours that kept the scoreboard ticking for Bangladesh.

Akhter's wicket sparked a flare and West Indies kept striking at regular intervals thereafter, with skipper Hayley Matthews (2-42) and Afy Fletcher (2-43) joining in with two wickets apiece.

Nahida Akter (25) and Rabeya Khan (23 not out) came up with useful runs towards the end with

a big final over that included four boundaries as Bangladesh ended their

50-over quota at 227/9. Aaliyah Alleyne was the star with the ball for the Windies, helping herself amass figures of 4-39 that dismantled the Bangladesh top-order.

Chasing 228 to stay alive in the Qualifier, West Indies started off well but quickly found themselves at 74/3 from 26/0, with Qiana Joseph (31), Shemaine Campbelle (24) and Zaida James (9) starting off well but unable find the rhythm to surge ahead, thanks to the Bangladesh spinners.

Skipper Hayley Matthews and Stafanie Taylor joined hands and the pair added up a resilient 66-run stand for the fourth wicket to bring the Windies back into the contest.

With Marufa Akhter striking big to dismiss both batters in consecutive overs, West Indies once again found themselves in troubled waters.

Chinelle Henry and Shabika Gajrabhi (20) forged a strong 50-run partnership to put them back in the chase, before drama unfolded once again as Ritu Moni struck to get rid of the latter. However, Henry picked pace with her big hitting and finished off the job in resilient fashion with four overs to spare.

West Indies face Thailand next in their final Qualifying clash on April 19, whereas Bangladesh take on hosts Pakistan in their final game on the same day.

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