**Srinagar SATURDAY** MARCH 29 2025 28 Ramadan 1446 Issue No: 76 Volume: 15

# www.dailyheadlinestoday.com 15TH EADLINES PUBLICATION HEADLINES **Voice To The Voiceless**

**DC inspects** beautification works in Kishtwar Town



## **Gunfight in Kathua Enters Second** Day, Death Toll Rises to Seven

**HT News Network** 

JAMMU, MAR 28: : Heavy gunfire and powerful explosions echoed for the second straight day in the Safiyan area of Kathua district, as police, assisted by the Army and CRPF, resumed their operation on Friday morning following a night-long pause to secure the region.

Security officials said a fourth policeman's body was spotted using drones near the encounter site, raising the total police death toll to four. The ongoing operation has also resulted in the killing of three militants, while a police officer remains missing.

The deadly standoff began on Thursday morning when security forces engaged three suspected Pakistani militants of the Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM) outfit in an intense day-long gunfight near Jakhole village in



### J-K LG, CM Pay Tributes To Policemen **Martyred In Kathua Encounter**

■ HT News Network

JAMMU, MAR 28: Jammu and Kashmir Lt Governor Manoj Sinha and Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Friday paid rich tributes to the police personnel who lost their lives in an ongoing encounter in Kathua TURN ON.....PAGE 02



others sustained injuries. At dawn, security forces resumed their search operation, focusing on retrieving bodies, locating the missing policeman, and eliminating any remaining threats. Officials suspect that the militants may have infiltrated recently from Pakistan via the International Border in

the Ghati Juthana area of

Rajbagh. By the end of the day, three policemen had lost their

lives, while a Deputy Superin-

tendent of Police (DSP) and six

Hiranagar. However, it is still unclear whether this group managed to evade an earlier cordon in Sanyal forest or if they are part of a separate infiltration attempt. The Special Operations Group (SOG) of the Jammu and Kashmir Police, along with Army

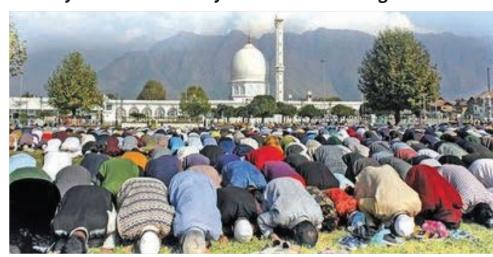
and CRPF personnel, led the

offensive, successfully neutral-

izing three militants. TURN ON.....PAGE 02

### Thousands of devotees throng Dargah Hazratbal shrine on Jumat-ul-Vida

Valley observes last Friday of Ramadan with religious fervor



**HT News Network** 

SRINAGAR, MAR 28: Worshippers across Kashmir thronged mosques and shrines to observe Jumat-ul-Vida, the last Friday of the holy month of Ramadan, with the largest gathering witnessed at Dargah Hazratbal, where thousands of devotees offered prayers.

Faithful people from different parts of the Valley gathered at the historic Hazratbal shrine,

where men, women, and children prayed for peace and prosperity.

As per the details available with the news agency- the major Masjids and shrines saw significant gatherings as people marked the sacred day with devotion.

Meanwhile, the historic Jamia Masjid in Srinagar remained closed, preventing devotees from offering congregational prayers. The

TURN ON.....PAGE 02

### Over 5,200 contempt cases pending in High Court of J&K & Ladakh

**■** HT News Network

SRINAGAR, MAR 28: Atotal of 5,244 contempt cases are pending before the High Court of Jammu and Kashmir & Ladakh as of March 24, 2025, according to data presented in the Lok Sabha by the Ministry of Law and Justice.

The figures, as reported by the news agency—were revealed in response to a question on the total number of contempt cases across the Supreme Court and various High Courts in India.

The data, sourced from the Nation $al \, Judicial \, Data \, Grid \, (NJDG), highlights$ the backlog of contempt petitions, which involve non-compliance with judicial orders.

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### Over 800 vacant positions at AIIMS Jammu, Awantipora

**■ HT News Network** 

SRINAGAR, MAR 28: AIIMS Jammu and AIIMS Awantipora are facing staff shortages, with a combined total of 820 vacant positions, as per data presented in the Lok Sabha by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.

According to the figures, accessed by the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), AIIMS Jammu has 81 vacant faculty positions out of 183 sanctioned posts, while 495 non-faculty positions, including nursing staff, junior residents, and senior residents, remain unfilled out of 1,267 sanctioned posts.

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### J&K, Ladakh report 417 TB deaths in 2024

**■** HT News Network

SRINAGAR, MAR 28: Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh recorded a total of 417 Tuberculosis (TB) deaths in 2024, according to data presented by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare in the Lok Sabha.

The figures include 408 TB-related deaths in J&K and 9 in Ladakh. India has seen a 17.7% decline in TB incidence from 237 per 100,000 population in 2015 to 195 per 100,000 in 2023.

As per the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), the government has set a target to eliminate TB by 2025, but challenges remain in several states, including J&K and Ladakh, where geographical barriers, limited healthcare access, and winter disruptions affect treatment.The central and UT governments continue to strengthen

TURN ON.....PAGE 02

### Strong winds cause widespread damage in Kashmir

19 flights cancelled, many areas witness power outages; MeT predicts dry weather till April 6



HT News Network

SRINAGAR, MAR 28: Strong and

gusty winds caused widespread damage across Kashmir on Friday and led

TURN ON.....PAGE 02

### **Gusty winds aftermath: PDD restores over 90%** electricity

**■** HT News Network

**SRINAGAR, MAR 28:** Following the gusty winds in many places of Kashmir, the Power Development Department (PDD) has restored over 90 percent electricity in the affected areas.

An official informed the news agency—, that the electricity lines were badly damaged because of the gusty winds.The official said that the huge damage was caused in many areas of

### **Delhi HC Directs MP Engineer** Rashid to Deposit Rs 4 Lakh for Attending Parliament

HT News Network

NEW DELHI, MAR 28,: The Delhi High Court has directed Jammu and Kashmir MP Abdul Rashid Sheikh, alias Engineer Rashid, to deposit Rs 4 lakh with prison authorities to cover travel expenses for attending the ongoing Parliament session.

A division bench had earlier allowed Rashid to attend Lok Sabha proceedings in custody till April 4, rejecting the NIA's concerns about him being a flight risk. His counsel informed the court that he had already deposited Rs 1.45 lakh and would submit the remaining Rs 2.55 lakh within three days. The NIA opposed Rashid's plea for a waiver of travel costs, arguing that allowing him to speak in Parliament could be misused. Rashid, currently in Tihar Jail under UAPA charges related to a 2017

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### Survey Of Jammu-Poonch Rail Link Via Akhnoor, Rajouri **Shows Low Traffic Projections: Railway Minister**

**■** HT News Network

**NEW DELHI, MAR 28:** A survey for a new 223-km rail line between Jammu and Poonch via Akhnoor and Rajouri was carried out and the project cost was assessed as Rs 22,771 crore but it has low traffic projections, Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said in a written reply in the Rajya Sabha on Friday.

BJP MP Ghulam Ali asked if it has been proposed to the government to establish Jammu-Rajouri-Poonch railway connectivity.

"The work on the new railway line connecting Jammu line between Jammu and



with Srinagari.e. Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla Rail Link (USBRL) project (272 km) has been completed. This project covers the districts of Udhampur, Reasi, Ramban, Srinagar, Anantnag, Pulwama, Budgam and Baramulla in Jammu & Kashmir," Vaishnaw said.

He added, "Survey for new

Poonch via Akhnur and Rajauri (223km) was carried out. The cost of the project was assessed as Rs 22,771 crore. The project has low traffic projections." According to the minister, sanctioning of railway projects is a continuous and dynamic process. These projects are taken up on the basis of remunerativeness, last mile connectivity, missing links and alternate routes including connectivity to hilly and border areas, augmentation of congested/saturated lines, socio-economic considerations and the likes. And these depend upon liabilities of ongoing projects, overall

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### **CAT Jammu temporarily** lifts ban on doctors' private practice

**■ HT NEWS NETWORK** 

SRINAGAR, MAR 28: The Central Administrative Tribunal (CAT) in Jammu has stayed the ban on the private practice of doctors after finding that the ban order was passed without following the proper procedure.

According to details obtained by the news agency—CAT also determined that the impugned orders were issued based on incorrect facts.

Notably, in the first week of the ongoing month, the Health and Medical Education Department banned the private practice of Dr Pawan Kumar, Consultant Anesthesia at CHC Ramgarh, and Dr Mohan Lal Attri, Consultant Surgeon at CHC R S Pura, for a period of five years to prevent potential risks associated with

TURN ON.....PAGE 02

### **Kashmir witnesses** dip in Eid shopping this year

Garment sales plunge by 95%, traders struggle

**■ HT NEWS NETWORK** 



Srinagar, Mar 28: With Eid-ul-Fitr just days away, Kashmir's markets are witnessing a concerning slowdown in sales, reflecting broader economic distress, particularly in the garment sector, where sales have plummeted by 95 per cent.

Trade leader Mohammad Yaseen Khan, Chairman of Kashmir Economic Alliance (KEA), while speaking to the news agency—, highlighted the struggles faced by businesses across sectors, citing high taxation, declining purchasing power, and financial burdens on shopkeepers.

Speaking on the current market scenario, Khan pointed out that while the festive season usually boosts retail activity, this year's sales are down by nearly 95% in the garment industry.

"The business community is facing

TURN ON.....PAGE 02

### Chaos! No exam centre in Kashmir, strong winds put question mark on fate of NEET-SS candidates Flights canceled, aspirants book cabs to reach Jammu, Delhi other states

**HT News Network** 

SRINAGAR, MAR 28:: Fate of hundreds of NEET-SS candidates from Kashmir hangs in balance as many of them couldn't travel to lammu, Delhi and other places on Friday as many flights were cancelled at the Srinagar airport due to strong and gusty winds.

According to the details available with the news agency—) many candidates had booked air tickets to reach their examination centres



to appear in the examination scheduled to be held on Saturday morning. However, there was complete chaos at the Srinagar Airport today due to cancellation of flights.

Several candidates told agencythat aspirants from Kashmir are forced to spend more than Rs 20,000 per head and at least two to three days of travel to other states to appear in the examina-

"We often face such issues as

TURN ON.....PAGE 02

## Deputy Chief Minister attends annual Jod Mela at Gurudwara Shaheed Baba Deep Singh Ji, R S Pura Visits GMC, enquires about Kathua encounter injured

#### **HT News Network**

JAMMU, MARCH 28: Deputy Chief Minister, Surinder Kumar Choudhary, today attended the annual Jod Mela and Gurmat Samagam at Gurudwara Shaheed Baba Deep Singh Ji in Khour, RS Pura.

The Deputy Chief Minister reaffirmed the commitment of the government towards addressing the issues and concerns of the community with sincerity and urgency. He encouraged the Sangat to uphold the timeless teachings of the Sikh Gurus, emphasizing their legacy of compassion, unity and justice. S. Ranjit Singh Tohra, President, District Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee(DGPC)Jammu, and S. Ranvir Singh, Joint Secretary, DGPC Jammu, addressed the gathering with religious discourses.

They voiced concerns over social evils and outlined pressing issues faced by the Sikh community, urging the government to act swiftly. Key demands included recognizing Punjabi as an official language of Jammu & Kashmir (UT), introducing Punjabi as an optional subject in schools, and increasing the availability of Punjabi teachers.

They also called for amendments to the Sikh Religious and Endowment Act, 1973, to align with Sikh Rehat Maryada, implementation of the Anand Marriage Act for independent Sikh marriage registration and the establishment of a Minority Commission to protect the Sikh rights in J&K.

The event witnessed presence of S Ranjit Singh Tohra, President, DGPC Jammu; S Ranvir Singh, Joint Secretary, DGPC Jammu; DGPC members, S



Avtar Singh, S Karan Singh Bali and S Gurmeet Singh besides Rattan Lal Gupta, Rakesh Singh and other dignitaries. Deputy

Chief Minister, Surinder Chowdhary, today visited the Government Medical College (GMC) Hospital in Jammu to

enquire about the condition of police personnel injured in an encounter in Kathua. During his visit, the Deputy

Chief Minister met with the hospital authorities and medical staff to assess the condition of the injured. He directed the GMC administration to provide the best possible medical care and ensure that all necessary resources are made available for their treatment.

Interacting with the patients and their families, the Deputy Chief Minister assured them of the government's full support during this challenging time.

"The safety and health of our people are paramount. I have instructed the hospital to leave no stone unturned in providing top-quality care to those injured in the Kathua encounter," said the Deputy Chief Min-

He also expressed solidarity with the affected families, emphasizing the administration's resolve to maintain peace and security in Jammu & Kashmir.The Deputy Chief Minister was accompanied by senior officials from the Health Department and local administration, who briefed him on the medical arrangements in place. During his visit, the Deputy Chief Minister met with the hospital authorities and medical staff to assess the condition of the injured. He directed the GMC administration to provide the best possible medical care and ensure that all necessary resources are made available for their treatment. Interacting with the patients and their families, the Deputy Chief Minister assured them of the government's full support during this challenging time. "The safety and health of our people are paramount. I have instructed the hospital to leave no stone unturned in providing top-quality care to those injured in the Kathua.

### **CONTINUE FROM FRONT PAGE......**

#### **CASES**

While the Supreme Court of India has 1,852 pending contempt cases, various High Courts collectively account for 1.43 lakh pending cases, with the J&K and Ladakh High Court among them.

The government, in its response, said the reasons for non-compliance with court orders are not centrally documented, as implementation responsibilities lie with respective administrative ministries and departments—

#### **VACANT**

AIIMS Awantipora, which is still in its early stages, has 94 unfilled faculty positions, with no reported recruitments so far. Among 252 sanctioned non-faculty positions, only two have been filled, leaving 250 vacancies.

The government said the recruitment process is an ongoing effort and that vacancies are influenced by factors such as the availability of qualified professionals, reservation policies, and the institute's location.

In response to the staffing shortages, temporary and contract-based hiring has been undertaken.

Standing Selection Committees at each AIIMS have been set up to speed up faculty recruitment. AIIMS Delhi conducts the Institute of National Importance Combined Entrance Test (INI-CET) and Institute of National Importance Super Speciality (INI-SS) exams twice a year to recruit Junior and Senior

AIIMS Delhi also holds the Centralized Nursing Officer Recruitment Common EligibilityTest(NORCET)fornursing officer recruitment across AIIMS and central hospitals.

A Common Recruitment Examination (CRE) is conducted for Group B and C nonfaculty positions in AIIMS and other central government hospitals-

### TB

TB detection and treatment mechanisms in J&K and Ladakh. However, experts stress the need for early diagnosis, increased access to medicines, and better healthcare infrastructure to meet the 2025 TB elimination deadline-

### **GUNFIGHT**

Meanwhile, officials reported that five police personnel, including an SDPO, were trapped in the thickly forested encounter zone near a rivulet. The SDPO, a DSP-rank officer, was later rescued in an injured condition on Thursday evening, but three of his personal security officers (PSOs) were found dead. The body of the fourth officer was recovered on Friday morning.

Apart from the injured SDPO, three more policemen were admitted to a hospital in Kathua, where their condition is said to be stable. Additionally, two Army personnel sustained injuries during the encounter.

Top security officials, including Director General of Police (DGP) Nalin Prabhat and Inspector General of Police (IGP) Jammu Zone Bhim Sen Tuti, have been supervising the counter-militancy operation from Kathua for the past four days.

Security forces have also recovered vital evidence from a suspected militant hideout in Hiranagar, including four loaded M4 carbine magazines, two grenades, a bulletproof jacket, sleeping bags, tracksuits, food packets,

and materials for making improvised explosive devices (IEDs).

Officials believe the militants were moving through the forest towards Billawar when a police team, led by an SDPO, launched an operation based on specific intelligence inputs. However, the police party came under heavy fire, triggering a fierce gunfight.

Following the attack, reinforcements from the police, Army, and CRPF were rushed to the area, with special forces of the Army airdropped to intensify efforts to neutralize the militants. [KNT]

district.Click Here To Join Daily Excelsior on WhatsApp And Get Latest News"I bow to the valorous martyrs of J&K Police, who laid down their lives for our motherland. My deepest condolences to their families," the Lt governor said in a post on X.

In the ongoing encounter, he said several terrorists were neutralised.

"J&K Police & Security Forces are on the job. Operation in progress," the post, shared by the office of the Lt Governor, said.

Abdullah also condoled the death of the

"Pride and grief intertwine as we remember Balwinder Singh Chib, Jaswant Singh, and Tariq Ahmed, who laid down their lives during an anti-terror operation in Kathua, Jammu & Kashmir," he said.

"My heartfelt condolences to their families. Their sacrifice in the line of duty will always be remembered. May the departed souls rest in peace, and heartfelt prayers for the swift recovery of those injured," the office of chief minister wrote on X.

Four police personnel and three terrorists were killed in the encounter in a remote

forested area of Kathua. The operation started early Thursday and was continuing when last reports were

### **STRONG**

to the cancellation of 19 flights from Sri-

nagar Airport. Officials told the news agency—that 15 arrivals and 14 departures of aircrafts were observed between 6:30 AM and 7:40 PM

"The strong winds, with speeds reaching 17 knots and gusting up to 27 knots, affected smooth operations, resulting in multiple delays and inconvenience to passengers," they added.

Officials said that IndiGo cancelled all its flights for the day.

Additionally, the winds caused damage in several parts of Kashmir, including Srinagar, Ganderbal, and Budgam. In Srinagar city, a vehicle was completely destroyed near the Tourist Reception Centre (TRC) as a tree fell on it due to strong winds. Several power lines were damaged, leading to power outages in multiple areas on Thursday-Friday night.

Chief Engineer, Kashmir Power Distribution Corporation Limited (KPDCL), Er Aaquib SW Deva while talking to KNO said, "Sudden windstorm has caused damage to power lines due to fallen trees and debris, affecting supply in several areas."

"KPDCL is working hard to restore power. We appreciate the patience of people and

their understanding," he added. Moreover, in Habbak, Srinagar, a rooftop collapsed onto high-tension (HT) power lines, further disrupting the electricity supply.

Reports of damage to window panes were also reported from the Habba Kadal area of Srinagar.

Moreover, in Ganderbal, strong winds damaged rooftops and outdoor structures, while residents reported high-speed winds affecting properties.

Pertinently, the gusty winds continued till this evening while the weatherman advised people and tourists to stay indoors & avoid boating & Shikara riding.

Director Meteorological department (MeT), Dr Mukhtar Ahmad informed KNO that the weather would remain generally dry till April 6-(KNO)

### **WIND**

ern and central Kashmir.

"We were all out on the ground to restore the electricity in the affected areas," the

The official further said, "We have almost restored 90 percent of electricity and work is going to restore the power in remaining areas."—(KNO)

### **ENG RASHID**

terror funding case, claimed he lacked the financial means to pay the Rs 8.74 lakh estimated by jail authorities for six days of atten-

The court directed the NIA to respond within four weeks to Rashid's request for a waiver. It also emphasized that parliamentary proceedings are under the Lok Sabha Speaker's jurisdiction, dismissing concerns over potential misuse.

Rashid, who defeated Omar Abdullah in the 2024 Lok Sabha polls, has been in custody since 2019 and was previously granted one-month interim bail to campaign in the J&K Assembly elections last year. [KNT]

#### **RAILWAYS**

availability of funds and competing demands, Vaishnaw said. (Agencies)

#### CAT

their continued involvement in non-institutional medical service. The department also issued orders for withholding one increment for both doctors, along with its consequential

It was ordered that Dr Pawan Kumar be transferred and posted at SDH Paddar, Kishtwar, and Dr Mohan Lal Attri be transferred and posted at CHC Gandoh with immediate effect.

The concerned doctors alleged a sheer violation of Rule 35 of the J&K Civil Services (Classification, Control, and Appeal) Rules, 1956, and claimed that it was a blatant violation of the principles of natural justice. They said the authorities did not hold the required inquiry as contemplated under the CCA Rules, 1956, and failed to provide an opportunity to be heard.

They also expressed being aggrieved by impugned order no. CMO-J/inquiry/2024/10192-97 dated 18.11.2024, passed by the concerned CMO without any competency or jurisdiction to constitute a committee to inquire into allegations of alleged negligence against them.

The doctors said the authorities had virtually imposed three punishments: a complete ban on their private practice for five years, the

withholding of one increment with consequential effects, and the transfer from Community Health Centre RS Pura and Community Health Centre Ramgarh to Community Health Centre Gandoh and Sub District Hospital Padder Kishtwar, respectively.

In their order sheet, CAT Jammu stated, "Prima facie, we have found substantial points to interfere with the impugned order since the orders have been passed without following the procedure and law governing the field." They added, "We have also found that the impugned orders have been passed on incorrect facts."

The case has been scheduled for a hearing

on April 28. Meanwhile, the operation of impugned order number CMO-J/inquiry/2024/10192-97 dated 18.11.2024 and impugned government order no. 186-JK(HME) of 2025 dated 03.03.2025 is stayed. The applicants will be allowed to perform their duties at the locations where they were working before the passing of the impugned orders—(KNO)

#### **EXAMS**

we are facing today as weather in Kashmir can change anytime. We aren't against setting up an examination centre in Jammu but there is a need for such centres in Kashmir as well," they said.

"We are made to pay through our nose for flight tickets and hotel accommodations. Besides we face uncertainty due to weather vagaries," aspirants said, as per KNO.

They once again requested concerned authorities to look into the matter and take immediate steps to set up NEET-SS examina-

tion centres in Kashmir from next season. Pertinently, candidates during the last few vears have many times written to the National Board of Examination and Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha and other authorities to set up examination centers in Kashmir-

#### **EID**

immense difficulties. Shops are shutting down due to lack of sales, and many retailers are unable to clear their dues." he said.

He attributed the sluggish trade to rising inflation and steep tax rates, stating that this has made goods unaffordable for the common people.

"Taxes have always existed, but today, they have reached 28%, leaving little margin for businesses. The financial strain is evident as traders struggle with loan repayments taken over the past decade," he said.

Another trend Khan flagged was the influx of heavy discounts and sales in the valley, which, he suggested, raises questions about sourcing and pricing.

"Suddenly, we see jackets being sold at 40–50% discounts. Where are these products coming from? Who is selling them, and at what cost?" he said.

He added that beyond retail, even the pharmaceutical sector was feeling the pinch, with declining sales despite its essential nature. "The economy is under severe pressure, and inflation has made survival difficult for both businesses and consumers," he said.

Khan said that businesses were struggling to stay afloat and financial institutions were tightening their grip on debt-ridden traders.

"We are witnessing the collapse of businesses across the civil lines area and beyond. Shops are closing down, and the market is not what it used to be during the festivities," Khan said—(KNO)

#### **FRIDAY**

closure drew condemnation from religious and political leaders, who termed it an infringement on religious freedom.

Anjuman Auqaf Jama Masjid has strongly condemned and expressed deep regret over the unjustified restrictions imposed by the state administration for the sixth consecutive  $year \, on \, holding \, the \, most \, significant \, religious \,$ gatherings of Muslims-Shab-e-Qadr and Jumu'atul-Wida—at the Jama Masjid Srinagar.

The Anjuman stated that it is extremely unfortunate that the largest place of worship for the Muslims of Kashmir, the Central Jamia Masjid Srinagar, was closed down last night itself, and the Mirwaiz of Kashmir, Dr. Molvi Muhammad Umar Farooq, was once again placed under house detention at his residence in Nigeen since yesterday.

The statement said that people from all sections of society, without any distinction, are not only protesting this unjust action of the authorities but are also considering this undemocratic approach as an infringement upon religious freedom, deeming it unacceptable.

Meanwhile, Mirwaiz Umar Faroog, who has been under house detention at his residence since yesterday, said on X (formerly Twitter), "After shab-e-Qadr, Jama Masjid Srinagar continues to remain closed to people and I under house detention, even today on Juma-Tul-Vida, when lakhs of people eagerly await the whole year to offer congregational prayers on this blessed Friday for great reward and blessing from Allah. Want to ask the authorities why is this most important centre of Kashmir's religious identity and affinity repeatedly targeted and peoples fundamental right to religious practice curbed, when tall claims of normalcy are trumpeted every day? Those ruling in peoples name cannot absolve themselves from standing up to address this gross injustice towards Muslims of the valley and the repeated closure of #JamaMasjid.

Additionally, the worshippers expressed their spiritual aspirations, seeking divine mercy. "This is a day when prayers are accepted. I prayed for the well-being of Kashmir and peace across the world," said Abdul Wahid, a devotee from Budgam, who was seen crying at the Hazratbal shrine.

An elderly worshipper shared his wish to perform Hajj soon. "My only desire now is to visit Mecca and Madina. May Allah fulfill my wish," he said. Authorities had also made elaborate arrangements to ensure the smooth

conduct of prayers. Traffic authorities managed vehicular movement, designated parking spaces, and deployed additional buses to ferry devotees.

Furthermore, J&K Chief Minister Omar Abdullah and National Conference President Dr. Farooq Abdullah also offered Jumat-ul-Vida prayers at Dargah Hazratbal, joining thousands of worshippers in seeking divine

Mohammad Aazan, a devotee from Srinagar, said Jumat-ul-Vida is a day of immense spiritual significance. "We come here to seek forgiveness and pray for a better future for our children," he said—(KNO)



## Rajpora's Sheermal: A cherished delicacy of Kashmir's festive celebrations

#### **HT News Network**

Pulwama, Mar 28: The Rajpora area, situated about five kilometres from Pulwama's district headquarters, is renowned for its traditional flatbread, Sheermal.

 $This \, delicacy, enjoyed \, with \, salt \, tea (Sheer \,$ Chai), is an essential part of festive occasions and ceremonies in Kashmir.

Sheermal is a circular, flatbread with a  $furrowed \, surface, adorned \, with \, sesame$ seeds that enhance its taste and appear-

Mohammad Sultan Sofi, a seasoned baker in Rajpora, has been working tirelessly at his local bakery, known as Kander Wan, to meet the soaring demand for Sheermal ahead of Eid and other celebrations. Like him, around 30 bakers in this historic village prepare the brownish, sesame-coated bread, upholding a longstanding culinary tradition.

Speaking to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), Sultan recalls that Sheermal was once a luxury item, affordable only to the wealthy. However, with improved socio-economic conditions, it has become a staple on festive occasions



and social gatherings across Kashmir. Rajpora's Sheermal is so well-regarded that orders pour in from Kashmiris residing outside the valley and even abroad. Pamposh Ahmad, another baker, said this Sheermal is famous due to the unwavering commitment of local bakers to quality. "Kashmiris visiting home buy Sheer-

mal in bulk to take back and gift to non-locals," he said.

During Eid and similar occasions, hundreds of customers from distant areas flock to Rajpora to purchase Sheermal. Each baker sells around a thousand kilogram of Sheermal during Eid, making it a profitable livelihood for those in the

trade.Longtime customers, like Manzoor Ahmad from Anantnag, express a deep preference for Rajpora's Sheermal over those made elsewhere. "Sheermal from other places lacks the same delicate taste," he said, adding that it has been a tradition in his family to buy Rajpora Sheermal and distribute it among relatives.

This beloved bread holds cultural significance, being served at engagement and wedding ceremonies, circumcisions, and religious events like Eid.

Sheermal comes in two distinct varieties-sweet and salty. The sweet version pairs perfectly with Kehwa, a traditional spiced green tea, while the salty one is best enjoyed with Noon Chai or Sheer

For Kashmiris, Sheermal is a symbol of tradition, festivity and cherished gatherings-Sheermal comes in two distinct varieties-sweet and salty. The sweet version pairs perfectly with Kehwa, a traditional spiced green tea, while the salty one is best enjoyed with Noon Chai or Sheer Chai.

For Kashmiris, Sheermal is a symbol of tradition, festivity and cherished gather-

#### **CCIK Expresses Concern Over Traffic Management in Srinagar** Ahead of Eid-ul-Fitr

#### **HT News Network**

Srinagar, March 28 (The Chamber of Commerce and Industries Kashmir (CCIK) has expressed deep concern over the lack of proper traffic management in Srinagar City on the eve of Eid-ul-Fitr, causing inconvenience to the public and losses to the business community.

According to CCIK, severe traffic congestion was witnessed in both downtown and other commercial areas, with the Srinagar Traffic Police failing to regulate the flow effectively. In many areas, personnel from the Jammu and Kashmir Police had to step in to manage traffic, despite this being the primary responsibility of the Traffic Police.

CCIK President Tariq Ghani has urged the administration to take immediate measures to streamline traffic management in the city, especially during festive occasions, to ensure smooth movement for shoppers and traders.

The business community has also appealed to the authorities to deploy additional traffic personnel and implement better traffic plans to prevent such disruptions in the future.

### **Aga Syed Hassan expressed** solidarity with People of **Palestine**

#### **HT News Network**

Srinagar March 28 (KNS): J&K Anjuman Sharie Shian's president Aga Syed Hassan Mosavi called on Muslims all over the world to unite in solidarity with the Palestinians against the Zionist, colonial entity of Israel.

In a statement issued, Aga Hassan said, "the Zionist script, is an extension of colonialism and Apartheid, never see in the history of human kind. It set out to viciously and violently occupy all of Palestine, by changing its demographics through ethnic cleansing, terrorism and genocide.

The first wave of expulsion in 1948 was followed by many more; all intended for the establishment and implementation of this evil system. The definitive target is to Judaize the city of Al Quds by removing the Islamic, Arabic and Christian characters of the city. Its policy remains inflammatory." While leading solidarity rally He said, "Israel's strategy in Al-Quds is a clear violation of international law, numerous resolutions of the Security Council and the UN General Assembly, concerning the rights of the Palestinian people and for the past half a century or more, the Arab world has been in a vicious cycle and its people have been suffering from a state of imbalance and an uncertain future." Aga Hassan further said, "this is the doing of their leaders, who have bargained with the Palestinian cause. Their leadership positions took precedence over the Palestinian resistance to the illegal occupation. They believed that the cause is the price to be paid in exchange for maintaining their oppressive, political leadership positions. Hence, these Arab leaders have become the guards for Israel's "borders" and its agents in the region, governing in accordance with what is dictated to them.

They seek to normalise political and economic relations with the Zionist state and foster military partnerships with it. They are also moving towards forming an Arab axis consisting of Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE, along with Israel, in order to confront Iran, their "perceived" common enemy."(KNS)

### **Hakeem Yaseen Decries Windstorm Devastation in Kashmir, Demands Urgent Relief for Affected Families**

### **HT News Network**

Srinagar, March 27:Hakeem Muhammad Yaseen, President of the Jammu and Kashmir Peoples Democratic Front (PDF) and former minister, has voiced deep anguish over the large-scale destruction caused by strong winds across Kashmir, particularly in Budgam district.

He expressed concern over the suffering of people whose homes and properties have been severely damaged.

"The strong winds have inflicted serious damage in several areas, including Khansahib, Beerwah, and Chadoora. Many families have been left in distress as their houses, shops, and essential infrastructure have been affected," Hakeem Yaseen said. "I urge the administration to immediately assess the extent of the damage and provide adequate compensation to the victims."

He stressed that the affected families should not be left to struggle on their own and called for a comprehensive relief package to address their hardships. "The authorities must act swiftly to ensure that those who have lost their roofs and properties receive prompt assistance. Emergency arrangements should be made to provide shelter and basic necessities to the worst-affected families," he added. Highlighting the extensive impact on public infrastructure, Hakeem Yaseen called for urgent measures to restore essential services.

### **JKPICCA President Bashir Ahmad Naik Extends Eid-ul-Fitr Greetings to Muslims**

#### **HT News Network**

Srinagar, March 28: Bashir Ahmad Naik, President of the Jammu and Kashmir Fruits and Vegetables Processing and Integrated **Cold Chain Association** (JKPICCA), has extended warm greetings to the Muslim community on the joyous occasion of Eid-ul-In his message, Naik



expressed his heartfelt wishes for peace, prosperity, and happiness for all. He emphasized the significance of Eid as a time of compassion, unity, and gratitude, encouraging people to share the festive spirit with those in need.

"Eid-ul-Fitr is a celebration of faith, kindness, and togetherness. May this auspicious occasion bring joy to every home and strengthen the bonds of brotherhood among us," he said.

Naik also acknowledged the hardworking farmers and traders in the fruit and vegetable industry, appreciating their contributions to the region's economy. He reiterated JKPICCA's commitment to supporting agricultural growth and enhancing cold chain infrastructure in Jammu and Kashmir.

He concluded by urging people to celebrate responsibly and continue working towards a harmonious and prosperous society.

### Altaf Bukhari urges administration to ensure adequate arrangements for Eid-ul-Fitr Jama Masjid Closure on Shab-e-Qadr Unjustified

#### **HT News Network**

Srinagar, March 28 (KNS): Apni Party President Syed Mohammad Altaf Bukhari has urged the administration to ensure all necessary arrangements for the upcoming auspicious occasion

In a statement issued here, Apni Party President Syed Mohammad Altaf Bukhari urged the administration to take necessary measures to ensure the smooth observance of

He said, "As the auspicious occasion of Eid-ul-Fitr approaches, I urge the administration to make all necessary arrangements to ensure its smooth observance. Authorities must ensure the adequate availability of essential commodities in markets and an uninterrupted supply of water and electricity for consumers during the festivi-

He added, "Essential commodities such as ration, mutton, poultry, vegetables, fruits, bakery products, and LPG must be readily available in sufficient quantities across markets." Apni Party President also emphasized the need for proper sanitation at



places of worship. He said, "The concerned departments must ensure adequate sanitation facilities, particularly at venues where congregational prayers will be held." He added, "Additionally, hassle-free transportation services should be arranged to help devotees reach the holy sites where congregational prayers will take place.Jammu and Kashmir Apni Party President Altaf Bukhari has expressed distress over the closure of Srinagar's historic Jamia Masjid on the sacred night of Shab-e-Qadr. He criticized the decision to bar worshippers from offering prayers and night-long supplications, calling it unjustified.

Bukhari emphasized that restricting access to such a significant place of worship on an occasion of profound spiritual importance is deeply concerning He said, "As the auspicious occasion of Eid-ul-Fitr approaches, I urge the administration to make all necessary arrangements to ensure its smooth observance. Authorities must ensure the adequate availability of essential commodities in markets and an uninterrupted supply of water and electricity for consumers during the festivities." He added, "Essential commodities

such as ration, mutton, poultry, vegetables, fruits, bakery products, and LPG must be readily available in sufficient quantities across markets." Apni Party President also emphasized the need for proper sanitation at places of worship. He said, "The concerned departments must ensure adequate sanitation facilities, particularly at venues where congregational prayers will be held." He added, "Additionally, hassle-free transportation services should be arranged to help devotees reach the holy sites where congregational prayers will take place. Jammu and Kashmir Apni Party President Altaf Bukhari.

## Two-week upskilling program for women trainees concludes at KU

#### **HT News Network**

Srinagar, Mar 28: ANB:To empower women trainees with entrepreneurial skills and facilitate their journey towards selfreliance, the Centre for Capacity Building and Skill Development (CCBSD), University of Kashmir (KU), successfully conducted a two-week upskilling program. As per statement issued to news service associated News Bureau ANB that The program, which commenced on March 13, 2025, was designed as a follow-up to previous training in creative apparel design under RUSA, equipping participants with practical knowledge and business insights.

Women trainees from various districts of Kashmir participated in the program, which combined hands-on training with expert-led sessions on self-help group (SHG) formation, financial literacy and entrepreneurship.

Speaking at the valedictory session, Controller of Examinations KU, Dr. Majid Zaman Baba emphasized the significance



of contemporary skills, including AI and entrepreneurial competencies.

"Bridging the gap between aspiring entrepreneurs and government schemes is crucial for sustainable business growth," he said. Dean Students' Welfare KU, Prof.

Parvez Ahmed, highlighted the evolving nature of education, stressing that skill development is no longer confined to technical institutes.

"With the NEP 2020 framework, skill training must be aligned with market demands to create meaningful employment opportunities," he remarked. Earlier, Director CCBSD KU, Dr. Aadil Bashir, shared the objectives of the program and discussed the key skills impart-

ed during the training. The event proceedings were conducted by Mr. Mohammad Yousuf, Project Officer CCBSD KU, while Mr. Manzoor Ahmad Mir, Project Officer CCBSD KU, delivered the vote of thanks on the occasion. ANB Women trainees from various districts of Kashmir participated in the program, which combined hands-on training with expert-led sessions on self-help group (SHG) formation, financial literacy and entrepreneurship.

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### **EDITORIAL**

### **Regulation of** mutton price not a govt's baby now

ver the past few days reports about exorbitant charging by the meat sellers have come in from the different areas of Kashmir valley. The people as a whole have been demanding that there should be regulation of the mutton prices and these should be fixed so that there is no confusion about the same. Ever since Jammu & Kashmir has become a union territory the government has got no jurisdiction over the price

In the past the Department of Food, Civil Supplies & Consumer Affairs would fix the rate of the mutton and the people were expected to pay the same. At that time if some complaint would be lodged against a particular meat seller action under rules was taken against him. That is a thing of the past and as on date the meat prices have been decontrolled and the same can be decided by the meat sellers themselves.

The association of the meat sellers have fixed the rate of the mutton according to the quality of the product. The million dollar question in this regard is that how come a customer knows about the quality of the meat being given to him. Barring a negligible portion of the population the majority are unaware about the grade of the meat being sold in the market. In such a manner the meat sellers sell low grade to the customers at the rate of the higher grade of the meat.

Many meat sellers are taking advantage of the present situation and people are forced to feel the heat. At the same time there are exceptions as well with some of the mutton sellers resorting to fair practices in their day to day public dealing. These traders sell the best grade meat to the people at the rate fixed for the same grade of meat. It is important that the other meat sellers follow suit and stop resorting to unfair practices while dealing with the customers.

The mutton dealers and sellers association should also act responsibly and it is their duty to ensure that the meat sellers don't deceive the people. If the association acts in a transparent manner and takes punitive action against the errant meat sellers then the people would think that the association believes in providing quality meat to the masses. In such a manner the government has a limited role with all the shots being called by the mutton dealers.

## Eid-ul-Fitr: A Celebration of Gratitude. Compassion, and Islamic Values



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**\** id-ul-Fitr, the festival of joy and thanksgiving, marks the end of the holy month of Ramadan. It is not merely a celebration of feasting and festivity but a profound acknowledgment of spiritual growth, self-discipline, and gratitude. As the crescent moon signals the arrival of Shawwal, hearts are filled with joy – not only for the festivities but for the inner transformation that Ramadan has brought.

Fasting during Ramadan is an act of devotion and self-restraint, a reminder of the countless blessings we often take for granted. Abstaining from food, drink, and worldly desires from dawn till dusk fosters a deep sense of patience and empathy. It humbles the soul, allowing one to experience, even momentarily, the hunger and deprivation that many endure daily. Through this spiritual practice, believers grow closer to Allah and develop a heightened sense of gratitude.

### Gratitude Beyond Words: Embracing the

The spirit of Ramadan does not end with the sighting of the crescent moon. Eid-ul-Fitr serves as a reminder that the lessons learned during the month of fasting should continue to shape our lives. Gratitude is not simply expressed through words but also through actions - by caring for the less fortunate, uplifting the oppressed, and contributing to the welfare of society.

Islam mandates the giving of

Sadaqat-ul-Fitr before the Eid prayer, ensuring that even the most vulnerable can partake in the joy of Eid. This charitable offering purifies the fasts of believers and guarantees that no one is left behind during the festivities. It's not just a formality but a symbolic act of compassion, reflecting the essence of Islamic values.

### Remembering the Oppressed: A Call for

While we celebrate Eid with joy and abundance, it's essential to remember those who face injustice, conflict, and suffering. Across the world, including in Palestine, countless individuals endure the harsh realities of war, occupation, and displacement. Eid, in its essence, calls upon Muslims to stand in solidarity with the oppressed and marginalized.

Just as Ramadan cultivates empathy, Eid reinforces our responsibility to advocate for justice and extend our hands in support. As Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said:

"The believers in their mutual kindness, compassion, and sympathy are like one body: when any part of it suffers, the whole body responds with wakefulness and fever."

This spirit of unity is vividly reflected on Eid as communities come together, embracing one another in brotherhood and extending charitable hands to those in need.

#### Eid as a Reflection of Islamic Principles

Eid-ul-Fitr is a celebration that goes beyond material pleasures. It is a reaffirmation of faith and a commitment to living by the principles of Islam. The values of kindness, forgiveness, and compassion that are nurtured during Ramadan are meant to extend throughout the year. True gratitude is reflected not only in prayer and praise but also in how we treat others with dignity, respect, and love.

The day of Eid encourages reconciliation and the mending of broken relationships. On this day, grudges are set aside, and hearts are opened. Muslims are reminded to seek forgiveness from Allah and extend it to others, fostering unity within families and communities. This act of forgiveness is a powerful testament to the transformative impact of Ramadan.

#### Mindful Celebration: Practicing **Moderation and Gratitude**

Eid-ul-Fitr is a time of joy, but it is also a reminder of the importance of moderation. The Quran warns against extravagance and wastefulness, urging believers to remain conscious of their consumption. Celebrating mindfully, ensuring that resources are not wasted, and sharing with those in need exemplify the true spirit of Eid.

Furthermore, as we enjoy the blessings of this holiday, it is essential to remember those who are less fortunate. Donating to charities, volunteering at local shelters, and supporting community initiatives are ways to make a positive impact. These acts of service are a reflection of genuine

#### **Consumer Responsibility: Ensuring Fair Trade and Ethical Practices**

While celebrating, it is crucial to ensure that essential commodities are purchased at fair prices and meet quality standards. Government departments like Food Control and Standards (FCS) and Consumer Affairs (CA) play a vital role in regulating market prices. Their vigilance ensures that traders do not exploit consumers during festive occasions.

Citizens must also exercise ethical consumerism by supporting businesses that uphold fair trade practices. This collective responsibility fosters an equitable marketplace and protects the rights of all.

### Living the Lessons of Ramadan Beyond

As the echoes of Eid prayers fade and the festivities conclude, the challenge remains: to carry the lessons of Ramadan into our daily lives. The discipline, patience, and empathy cultivated through fasting should inspire continuous self-improvement. Muslims are encouraged to be conscious of their words and actions, maintain their connection with Allah through prayer, and remain steadfast in their commitment to justice and compas-

Reflecting on the plight of the oppressed serves as a constant reminder of our moral responsibilities. Advocating for peace, supporting humanitarian efforts, and standing against injustice are ways to embody the values instilled during Ramadan.

#### Tailpiece: A Celebration of Faith and Humanity

Eid-ul-Fitr is a day of joy, but its true beauty lies in its deeper meaning. It is a celebration of faith, gratitude, and the triumph of the soul over desires. It calls upon Muslims to rejoice in the mercy of Allah, share their blessings with others, and continue striving for righteousness

May the spirit of Eid illuminate our hearts with compassion, strengthen our bonds of unity, and inspire us to live lives of service and devotion. And as we exchange greetings of "Eid Mubarak," let us remember that the true essence of Eid lies in uplifting others and spreading joy - for that is the truest expression of gratitude

"Eid means happiness, and true happiness is when our sincere fasts are accepted in the court of Allah. It is when we live a life of 'Rabb Chaahi Zindagi' (a life aligned with Allah's will) instead of 'Mann Chaahi Zindagi' (a life driven by desires). For the one whose good deeds are accepted and who refrains from wrongdoing, Eid becomes a divine gift, a celebration of the soul's triumph."

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## Impact on livestock farmers and rural economy, one of the longest employee movements in the history of Haryana

Diploma Veterinary Association Haryana: Struggle continues for 1016 days; when will we get justice?



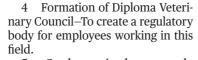
PRIYANKA SAURABH

Teterinary Livestock Development Assistants (VLDA), who play an important role in animal husbandry and veterinary services in Haryana, have been struggling for their legitimate demands for the last 1,016 days. These employees, sitting on a dharna in Sector-5 of Panchkula, are demanding an amendment in their service conditions, a change in designation, and a better pay scale. However, no concrete solution has been found by the government so far, due to which the resentment among the employees is increasing.

#### The main demands of the struggle

The major demands raised by the Diploma Veterinary Association Haryana are as follows:

- 1 The VLD Diploma should be renamed as DVSC (Diploma in Veterinary Science) so that it gets more recognition at the national level.
- 2 VLDA service rules should be amended so that the promotion and future of the employees can be secured.
- Change the designation of VLDA to VLEO (Veterinary Livestock Extension Officer) to give more official status to their role.



5 Grade pay in the pay scale should be upgraded so that employees get proper financial benefits. 6 Improvement of basic facilities

in animal hospitals of Haryana-so that the animal keepers of the state can get better services. 7. Amendment in service rules:

Assured Career Progression (ACP) should be implemented to ensure promotion and career growth of employees.

8. Participation in online transfer drive: All VLDAs should be included in the upcoming online transfer drive to maintain transparency and equity in the transfer process.

#### Political support and government silence

Various political parties in Haryana have started supporting this movement. Recently, many opposition leaders reached the protest site and called the demands of the association justified. They appealed to the government to find a solution soon.

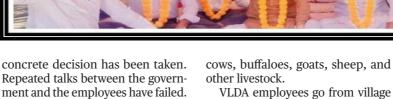
At the same time, the silence and inaction of the government are increasing the resentment among the protesters. Despite the important role of VLDA in the Animal Husbandry Department, they are being ignored. Questions are being raised about whether the government is taking this sector seriously.

#### What has been the government's response?

So far there has been no concrete statement or concrete action from the Haryana government. Some high officials have hinted at talks, but no







#### Impact on livestock farmers and rural economy

Haryana is an agriculture- and animal husbandry-based state, where lakhs of animal keepers are dependent on government veterinary hospitals. The shortage of VLDA employees and non-resolution of their problems is directly affecting the animal keepers.

If the condition of VLDA employees is improved, it will also improve the quality of animal health services. This will directly strengthen the rural economy and the dairy industry.

Haryana has a large number of

VLDA employees go from village to village and treat animal diseases and vaccinate them.

Due to government neglect, livestock farmers are not getting quality

#### The protesters' next strategy

The protest has been ongoing for over 1,000 days, but now the employees are preparing to take a more aggressive stance regarding their demands.

- 1 Protests will be intensified by VLDA employees across the state.
- 2 Work Stoppage Strike–If the government does not show seriousness, there can be a threat of stop-

page of services by the VLDA employees, which can lead to a huge crisis in the animal husbandry department.

### Experts' opinion: Can a solution be

Experts believe that the demands of VLDA employees are completely legitimate and the government should take them seriously.

"If the animal husbandry sector is to be strengthened, then VLDA employees have to be encouraged. Improving their designation and pay scale will also provide better services to animal keepers."

"Schemes are being made to promote animal husbandry across the country, but unless the employees working at the field level get respect-

able salaries and positions, the true benefits of the schemes will not be

#### What will happen next?

This struggle has now become one of the longest employee movements in the history of Haryana. The question is whether the government will pay attention to it or if this movement will drag on for longer.

The Haryana government should listen to these demands with sensitivity and find a solution as soon as

- The government should hold talks with the representatives of
- VLDA employees. 2 The process of forming the Diploma Veterinary Council should be initiated.
- 3 A survey and review report should be prepared to improve des-

ignation and pay scale. If the government finds a solution in time, it will not only be in the interest of the employees but will also prove to be an important step for the betterment of the entire animal

### Conclusion

husbandry sector.

The Haryana government should now seriously consider this issue. Finding a quick solution to this 1016-day-long conflict is not only in the interest of VLDA employees, but it is also necessary for the development of livestock farmers, the rural economy, and the state.

If the government does not take immediate action, this agitation could take a bigger form, which could affect animal husbandry services, and animal herders could suffer huge losses.

## Civilizations at War: The Israel-Palestine struggle through the ages

@HEADLINESTODA17

MALIK FIRDOUS

This in-depth article unveils the multifaceted history of the Israel-Palestine conflict, tracing its roots from ancient Canaan to contemporary challenges, highlighting key events, shifting power dynamics and the enduring quest for identity and justice amid centuries of turmoil and strife

15TH OF LADLINES

The region known today as Israel and Palestine has a long and complex history that begins with the ancient land of Canaan. Situated at the crossroads of major civilizations, Canaan was home to various peoples, including the Canaanites, Philistines, and early Hebrews. By the 12th century BCE, the Israelites emerged as a distinct group, establishing a loose confederation of tribes that eventually united under a monarchy. The reigns of King David and King Solomon marked the peak of ancient Israel's power, with Jerusalem becoming the political and religious center. Solomon's construction of the First Temple in Jerusalem solidified the city's role as a sacred site, but internal divisions and external pressures weakened the kingdom. After Solomon's death, the kingdom split into Israel in the north and Judah in the south, leaving both vulnerable to invasion.

In 722 BCE, the Assyrians conquered the northern kingdom of Israel, while Judah managed to survive for another century. However, in 586 BCE, the Babylonian Empire, under King Nebuchadnezzar, captured Jerusalem, destroyed the First Temple, and exiled much of the Jewish population to Babylon. This period of exile, known as the Babylonian Captivity, profoundly shaped Jewish identity and religious practices. When the Persian Empire, led by Cyrus the Great, conquered Babylon in 539

BCE, he allowed the Jews to return to their homeland and rebuild the Temple, ushering in the Second Temple period.

The region eventually fell under Roman control in 63 BCE, with increasing unrest culminating in a series of Jewish revolts. The most significant, the Great Jewish Revolt of 66-70 CE, led to the destruction of the Second Temple and the dispersal of Jews across the Roman Empire. This dispersion, known as the Jewish Diaspora, scattered Jewish communities throughout the Mediterranean and beyond, profoundly shaping Jewish life and identity for centuries to come.

The arrival of Islam in the 7th century marked a transformative era for the region. In 638 CE, Muslim armies, led by Caliph Umar, captured Jerusalem from the Byzantine Empire. The city became a significant site in Islam, with the construction of the Dome of the Rock and Al-Agsa Mosque, solidifying its status as the third holiest site in Islam. Under Islamic rule, Jews and Christians were granted protected status as "People of the Book," allowing them to practice their faiths while paying a special tax. This period brought relative stability and flourishing trade, with Jerusalem becoming a vibrant cultural and religious center.

The Crusades, beginning In 1096, brought a violent clash between Christian and Muslim forces over control of the Holy Land. In 1099, Crusaders captured Jerusalem, massacring much of the local population. The Crusader Kingdom of Jerusalem lasted for nearly a century before Saladin, the Muslim leader, recaptured the city in 1187. The struggle between Crusaders and Muslim forces continued for two centuries, with Jerusalem changing hands multiple times.

Following the Crusades, the Mamluks gained control of the region, followed by the Ottomans in 1517. Ottoman rule lasted for four centuries, during which the region experienced relative stability, with diverse communities coexisting under a system of local governance and religious autonomy.

By the 19th century, European powers had expanded their influence across the Ottoman Empire, which was in a state of decline. The Ottoman Empire, once a dominant force in the region, struggled with internal corruption, economic stagnation, and rising nationalist movements. European powers, particularly Britain and France, began exerting political and economic control, often exploiting the empire's weaknesses for their own strategic interests. As European ideas of nationalism spread, they inspired movements among both Arabs and Jews, laying the groundwork for future conflict in Palestine.

In the late 19th century, Zionism emerged as a political movement advocating for the establishment of a Jewish homeland in Palestine. Founded by Theodor Herzl, Zionism was a response to rising antisemitism in Europe and the desire for Jewish self-determination. Jewish immigration to Palestine increased significantly, particularly after waves of pogroms in Eastern Europe. By the early 20th century, Zionist settlers had begun purchasing land and establishing agricultural communities, often displacing local Arab farmers. At the same time, Arab nationalism was also on the rise, driven by opposition to European colonialism and a growing desire for Arab independence. Palestinian Arabs, who had lived in the region for generations, began to view Jewish immigration as a threat to their land and way of life.

The collapse of the Ottoman Empire after World War I left Palestine under British control as part of the League of Nations Mandate system. The British Mandate of Palestine (1920-1948) was marked by conflicting promises and growing tensions. During the war, Britain had made contradictory commitments to both Jews and Arabs. The 1917 Balfour Declaration expressed British support for a "national home for the Jewish people" in Palestine, while the earlier McMahon-Hussein Correspondence had promised Arab independence in exchange for their support against the Ottomans. These conflicting promises sowed distrust and animosity between the two communities.

Under British rule, Jewish immigration increased, leading to further land purchases and displacement of Palestinian peasants. The Arab population, feeling increasingly marginalized, organized revolts and protests, including the Arab Revolt of 1936-1939. British attempts to mediate the conflict failed, and by the end of the mandate period, tensions between Jews and Arabs had reached a breaking point. The British withdrawal in 1948 left the region on the brink of full-scale war, setting the stage for the partition of Palestine and the ensuing conflict.

The Balfour Declaration of 1917 marked a pivotal moment in the history of Palestine, as Britain publicly expressed support for the establishment of a "national home for the Jewish people" in Palestine. Issued during World War I, the declaration aimed to secure Jewish support for the Allied war effort, but it neglected to address the rights and aspirations of the Arab population, which made up the majority of the region's inhabitants. As Jewish

immigration increased under British rule during the 1920s and 1930s, tensions between Jews and Arabs escalated. The influx of Jewish settlers, along with land purchases that displaced Palestinian farmers, fueled resentment and led to violent clashes. By the 1930s, the Palestinian Arab population viewed Zionism as a colonial threat to their homeland, leading to widespread unrest, including the Arab Revolt

In response to the growing unrest and international pressure, the United Nations proposed a partition plan in 1947, aiming to divide Palestine into separate Jewish and Arab states, with Jerusalem as an international zone. The plan allocated 55% of the land to the Jewish state and 45% to the Arab state, despite the Jewish population comprising only about one-third of the total population. While Jewish leaders reluctantly accepted the plan, Arab leaders rejected it, viewing the partition as an unjust imposition that violated the rights of the indigenous Palestinian population.

Following the UN's approval of the partition plan, violence erupted between Jewish and Arab communities. When the British mandate ended in May 1948, David Ben-Gurion declared the establishment of the State of Israel. This declaration triggered a full-scale war between the newly established Israeli state and neighboring Arab nations. During the war, over 700,000 Palestinians were forcibly displaced or fled from their homes, an event Palestinians refer to as the Nakba, meaning "catastrophe." Many of these refugees were never allowed to return, leading to a lasting legacy of displacement, loss, and unresolved grievances.

The 1948 Arab-Israeli War, also known as the War of Independence to Israelis and the Nakba ("catastrophe") to Palestinians, erupted after the declaration of the State of Israel on May 14, 1948. Arab nations, including Egypt, Jordan, Syria, Iraq, and Lebanon, invaded Palestine to prevent the establishment of a Jewish state and support Palestinian Arabs. Despite being outnumbered, Israeli forces, bolstered by better organization and arms supplies, emerged victorious. By the end of the war, Israel controlled 78% of historic Palestine, far beyond the boundaries allocated in the 1947 UN Partition Plan. Jordan took control of the West Bank and East Jerusalem, while Egypt administered the Gaza Strip. For Palestinians, the war resulted in the displacement of over 700,000 people, many of whom fled to refugee camps in neighboring countries, where they and their descendants remain to this day.

In June 1967, tensions between Israel and its Arab neighbors escalated into the Six-Day War, a swift and decisive conflict that reshaped the region. Fearing an imminent attack, Israel launched a preemptive strike, destroying the Egyptian Air Force and swiftly defeating Egypt, Jordan, and Syria. As a result, Israel seized the Sinai Peninsula and Gaza Strip from Egypt, the West Bank and East Jerusalem from Jordan, and the Golan Heights from Syria. The occupation of these territories dramatically altered the Israeli-Palestinian dynamic, placing millions of Palestinians under Israeli military rule. The capture of East Jerusalem, home to the Al-Aqsa Mosque, further inflamed tensions, as Palestinians saw their holy sites fall under Israeli control. Israel's occupation of these territories, deemed illegal under international law, continues to be a core issue in the ongoing conflict.

### **Classroom Reflections-A Road To Education**



BY MOOL RAJ

'N the quiet moments between lessons, stand-**L**ing before my students, I am struck by the profound disconnect between what education could be and what it has become in India. The world is constantly evolving. Today, our survival as a species depends on education systems that prepare minds to tackle the modern world's complex and interconnected challenges.

However, in these times of global competitiveness, we have lagged far behind. The present global crisis has further heightened the need for applied knowledge that requires courage and willingness to engage and question traditional ideas, to find solutions, and to have the power to ensure results. So, the act of learning itself demands intellectual bravery – an openness to challenge one's own assumptions and explore perspectives beyond what is comfortable. Without courage, knowledge is static; without power, it is irrelevant.

One does not simply gain knowledge; one must have the courage to seek it and the power to use it effectively. And once acquired, knowledge empowers its bearer, who then gains the capacity to change, influence, and build upon existing realities.

However, this dynamic of empowerment through knowledge is absent in Pakistan's educational system. During a decade in the classroom, I have witnessed firsthand how the system fails



to equip students with the tools they need for intellectual empowerment. Instead, the curriculum remains outdated, rooted in content that is not only irrelevant to contemporary realities but also does not align with the development stages of young minds.

Without courage, knowl-

edge is static. As a teacher, I have often seen students lose curiosity. How can we expect them to thrive when the very system that is supposed to ignite their minds weighs them down with irrelevant material? We teach them about historical figures and outdated concepts but ignore the rapidly evolving technological, social, and economic landscapes they are a part of. We fail to connect their current experiences with the present and future, creating a chasm between education and life.

This disconnect is more than an academic problem; it is a social one. The cycle of stagnation feeds into a herd mentality, perpetuating social chaos. When education fails to empower

individuals with the tools to think critically, innovate, and adapt, it leaves society vulnerable to ignorance, inequality and dysfunction. The absence of intellectual empowerment in classrooms translates to a society too illequipped to address the challenges before it; it fosters a culture of compliance over creativity and perpetuates poverty, injustice and disenfranchisement. Instead of producing individuals who can harness knowledge's transformative power, we are producing generations stuck in a loop.

I have also observed a significant gap between students' intellectual maturity and their curriculum. The educational content provided to students in the country, especially in Balochistan, is far below the standards of their age group. This is a fundamental flaw that continues to widen the gap between education and real-world preparedness.

Many units I teach have been literally copied and pasted from the internet, printed without any critical

consideration or adaptation. This approach not only reflects a lack of originality but also underscores the absence of the deep understanding that students need at each stage of intellectual and psychological growth. For example, exercises that require critical thinking or challenge the capacity for problemsolving are absent, replaced by superficial tasks that fail to inspire curiosity. In other words, the curriculum is not aligned with students' intellectual development.

Psychologically and mentally, students have outgrown the elementary exercises they are presented with. They come to class ready for challenges that stretch their reasoning, creativity, and critical faculties. Instead, they are met with content and exercises that are beneath their capabilities,

causing them to lose interest. When students are not given material that corresponds with their evolving intellect, the impact is devastating. Their natural curiosity is stunted, their motivation diminishes and their overall engagement with education

suffers. The road to a better education system in India is one that demands courage from both the educators and policymakers. We need the courage to challenge entrenched norms, the power to implement curricula that foster intellectual empowerment and the vision to break free from the bandwagon cycle that has long kept our educational institutions static. Until we recognise that knowledge is power and that it also requires power, the cycle will continue, to the detriment of our students and society at

THE AUTHOR IS A REGULAR **COLUMNIST AND FREELANCE** WRITER

## **Are Healthcare Trainings Effective Or Just A Formality?**

DR FAZAL WANI

key component of every healthcare system is training, which aims to improve service delivery and the abilities of medical staff. Theoretically, these courses aim to give healthcare professionals the skills and self-assurance they need to deal with obstacles in the real world. But in reality, the manner in which these trainings are delivered frequently calls into doubt their efficacy. Do they actually accomplish their goals, or have they turned into for-

### A Training Experience Worth

Remembering I've participated in several training sessions over the years, but I recently had an eye-opening encounter with a National Health Systems Resource Centre (NHSRC) team. They took a different strategy than I had ever seen. They made the training lively and interactive in place of boring lectures. Through case studies, chartmaking activities, and quizzes, participants were urged to actively participate. The training focused on implementing the knowledge in real-world situations rather than merely memorizing it. It seemed like a training that stuck with me long after it was over-a session that really made an impression.

#### The Stark Contrast In Our **Health System**

Sadly, our healthcare system rarely offers such worthwhile training opportunities. Most training in the region appears to be carried out only to satisfy formal requirements. For example, more than 10 different trainings were hurriedly

There is a need for engaging and well-timed training sessions to enhance skills and improve patient care

held in the last two months alone. From Child care to emergency treatment, the subjects were wide-ranging and all needed concentrated attention. However, it becomes stressful when they are packed into such a short amount of time. Even as a medical professional, I found it difficult to absorb and retain so much information in such a short span. If this is the case for me, what about others who may not have the same level of expo-

sure or experience? This raises a fundamental question: How effective can these trainings be if they are conducted back-to-back without allowing time for proper assimilation? Learning should be a gradual process, not a hurried task to check off a list.

The Reality Behind The Rush A closer look at the system shows that these consecutive training sessions are frequently driven more by financial deadlines than by a genuine desire to improve skills. Instead of actually training healthcare personnel, the haste to finish all training in the final months of the fiscal year implies that the main goal is to use up all available funds. Participants get disinterested as a result, which also lowers the learning quality. Many people don't really gain from attending; they just do it because

they have to.

#### A Better Approach To **Healthcare Training**

It would be more effective to distribute all training evenly throughout the year rather than clubbing them near the end. This would enable learners to concentrate on a single subject at a time, put what they have learned into practice, and come back to the subsequent training with better knowledge. Furthermore, training quality is just as important as timing. As demonstrated by the NHSRC-led sessions, training ought to be created with active participant engagement in mind. The traditional lecture-style approach should be replaced with interactive techniques, practical experience, and real-case discussions. Only then can we make sure that training sessions are more than just a formality and actually result in better healthcare services.

#### Conclusion

In the sector of healthcare, training ought to focus on actual learning and skill development rather than only meeting formalities. The present rushed approach just increases the workload for professionals and does little to improve healthcare service. We need to reconsider our strategy if we truly want a workforce better trained: prioritizing engagement over formality, quality over quantity, and appropriate timing over financial urgency. Only then will training sessions serve their true purpose in strengthening our healthcare system.

The writer is a medical officer at the PHC Shargole wanifazal@gmail.com

## Dy CM inaugurates 2 day PHDCCI workshop on Intellectual Property Rights, trade, business promotion

## Reiterates Govt's commitment to catalyse industrial ecosystem, growth

#### **HT News Network**

JAMMU, MARCH 28: Emphasising government's commitment to catalyse the industrial ecosystem, Deputy Chief Minister, Surinder Choudhary, said that numerous interventions and policies are being implemented towards industrial growth of Jammu and Kashmir as one of the priorities of the present

administration. He was speaking after inaugurating a two day workshop on Intellectual Property Rights (IPR), Trade and Business Promotion in Jammu organised by the PHD Chamber of

Commerce and Industry (PHDCCI), in collaboration with the Office of Development Commissioner MSME, Union Ministry for MSME here today.

The event, moderated by Kanchan Zutshi, Director, PHDCCI, aimed to enhance awareness and foster strategies for IPR, trade, and business promotion in Jammu & Kashmir.

The event was attended by MLA Khansahib, Saifuddin Bhat, Com $missioner Secretary, Industries \ and$ Commerce, Vikramjit Singh, Director Industries and Commerce, Jammu, Dr Arun Manhas, Prominent Industrialists, office bearers of PHDCCI and senior officers.

While highlighting the global sig-



nificance of intellectual property rights with examples such as Apple, KFC and McDonald's, the Deputy Chief Minister said that robust IP

strategies drive worldwide success. He commended the local entrepreneurs, including lavender farmers and Basmati rice producers, for their efforts in brand registration.

Regarding the industrial growth and employment, the Deputy CM said that the government is well aware of the potential of industrial sector in boosting the local economy industrial creating job avenues for the youth. He assured that his administration would enforce policies to prioritise local hiring and bolster support for indigenous businesses.

MLA Khansahib highlighted the need for promoting local entrepreneurs. He said that the same would go a long way in ensuring the youth get attracted to setting up their own units and ensuring the creation of jobs locally.

Commissioner Secretary, Industries & Commerce, outlined the government policies designed to spur industrial development, describing IPR as a vital tool for economic progress. He encouraged the businesses to invest in innovation and brand protection to unlock sustainable

Director, Industries & Commerce, while speaking on the occasion, underscored the need for IPR awareness among the local enterprises, noting its potential to drive sustainable industrial growth. He urged the entrepreneurs to take advantage of the government schemes for patenting and trademark registration.

### Shrine Board and Narayana Health Care extend collaboration for enhanced Healthcare Services

#### **HT News Network**

Katra, March 28: The SMVD Charitable Society under the aegis of Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board (SMVDSB) and Narayana Vaishno Devi Specialty Hospitals Private Limited (NVD), a subsidiary of Narayana Health Care, Bangalore today signed an extension of their Concession Agreement for an additional eight years upto 2033, for the operation of the Super Specialty Hospital at Kakryal-Katra.The concession agreement was signed by Alok Kumar Maurya, Addl. Chief Executive Officer, SMVDSB and Sunil Kumar, CN; Sr. VP and

**Head Business Transformations** and Key initiatives, Narayana Health Care in the presence of Dr. Ashok Bhan and Suresh Kumar Sharma, Members of Shrine Board; Anshul Garg, Chief Executive Officer, Mahesh Sharma, FA/Chief Accounts Officer, SMVDSB; Dr. Yash Pal Sharma, Executive Director, SMVDIME; Sandhya J, Group Chief Financial Officer; Dr. M.M. Mathavan, Facility Director and Rohit Sethi, Sr. Manager – Finance of NVD and other officers of Board and NVD.

The decision to extend the collaboration was taken after a thorough review of the hospital's performance and the quality of healthcare services being provided to the patients by the Board at its 73rd meeting held on 18.12.2024 under the Chairmanship of Shri Manoj Sinha, Hon'ble Lt. Governor, JK-UT. The Shrine Board and NH Care have been working together since 2016 to provide worldclass healthcare services to the people of Jammu and Kashmir and the pilgrims visiting the Holy Shrine of Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Ji.

The Super Specialty Hospital inau-



gurated by Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi and operational since April 2016 has been offering specialized medical services across over 20 specialties. Key focus areas include Cardiology, Cardio-Vascular Surgery, Medical and Surgical Gastroenterology, Orthopaedics and Joint Replacement, Renal Sciences, Medical, Radiation and Surgical Oncology (Cancer) besides Critical Care Medicine. Equipped with state-of-the-art medical equipment, the hospital boasts a team of highly qualified and experienced doctors and paramedical staff ensuring top-notch patient care. Annually, the hospital provides in-patient treatment to around 50,000 patients and out-patient consultations to nearly 60,000. Since its inception, the hospital has also provided free treatment worth over Rs.50 crore to more than one lakh needy patients, as part of the Shrine Board's medical support policy. The hospital has also been providing training and capacitybuilding programs for the medical and paramedical staff in the region.

Noteworthy that SMVDIME - Medical College, established at a cost of Rs. 350 crore, commenced its operations in November 2024, expanding the Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Narayana Superspeciality Hospital's operational base. The college will be offering an MBBS program, starting with its first batch of 50 students in the 2025-26 academic session (upgradable to 100 seats). Notably, the hospital has 120 senior consultants and doctors serving in various superspeciality disciplines and additionally, the Board's Medical College has appointed 49 faculty members and 18 Sr. Residents, thus augmenting the numbers significantly.

With the signing of the renewed Agreement, Narayana Health (NH) will continue to provide comprehensive support in critical aspects including procurements, ensuring adherence to quality control standards as mandated by the National Medical Commission (NMC), facilitation in accreditation processes, implement and manage advanced IT systems, staffing and recruitment, besides providing expertise in budgeting and audits, thereby ensuring the hospital's operations remain streamlined, efficient and compliant with regulatory

### Rattan Lal Gupta urges PM Modi to convene All-Party Meet over the escalating terrorism in J&K

Expresses grief over martyrdom of 4 brave-hearts in Rajbagh area of District Kathua.

#### ■ HT News Network

Jammu, March 28: Rattan Lal Gupta, Provincial President of the Jammu and Kashmir National Conference (JKNC), raised serious concerns over the deteriorating security situation in Jammu and Kashmir, urging the Prime Minister Narendra Modi to convene an all-party meeting of J&K to discuss the alarming rise in terrorism across the Jammu region. He pointed out that terrorism, which was once largely contained to the Valley, has now started spreading across Jammu, putting civilians and security forces at heightened risk.

Paying heartfelt homage, the senior NC leader has expressed profound grief over the martyrdom of four brave soldiers in the Rajbagh area gunfight in district Kathua. He extended condolences to the bereaved families of the fallen heroes, emphasizing that their supreme sacrifice should not go in vain.

Rattan Lal Gupta reminded the Prime Minister of his earlier all-party meeting of J&K political leaders called in 2021, where he had assured the restoration of Jammu and Kash-



mir's statehood. He also recalled PM Modi's commitment to bridging the Dilli ki Doori (distance from Delhi) and Dil ki Doori (distance from the

Taking a dig at the BJP-led central government, Rattan Lal Gupta stated that Home Minister Amit Shah had assured the nation on the floor of the Parliament that the abrogation of Article 370 would put an end to terrorism in the region. "However, since the Dhangri killings in 2023, terrorism has escalated in the Jammu region, shattering the claims made by the Centre. The sacrifices of our

security personnel and innocent civilians highlight the failure of this policy," he asserted.

Further, the senior NC leader resented against the Centre for holding multiple high-level law and order meetings concerning Jammu and Kashmir while ignoring the Chief Minister who is heading the J&K Govt."How can officials discuss security matters without involving the elected leadership? Such an approach only deepens the governance crisis in J&K," he questioned. Taking a dig at the BJP-led central government, Rattan Lal Gupta stated that Home Minister Amit Shah had assured the nation on the floor of the Parliament that the abrogation of Article 370 would put an end to terrorism in the region. "However, since the Dhangri killings in 2023, terrorism has escalated in the Jammu region, shattering the claims made by the Centre. The sacrifices of our security personnel and innocent civilians highlight the failure of this policy," he asserted.

Further, the senior NC leader resented against the Centre for holding multiple high-level law and order meetings concerning Jammu.

### **ACT' ORGANISED A SEMINAR** ON WORLD THEATRE DAY IN TAGORE HALL SRINAGAR

#### HT News Network

Srinagar/ March 28thA thought-provoking seminar, "Importance of Theatre in the present times," was held today in Srinagar, bringing together renowned theatre artists, activists, and enthusiasts. The brain-storming session aimed to discuss the dwindling interest of youth in theatre and the vital role of theatre activists, government, and non-government organizations in revitalizing the art form. The seminar featured esteemed speakers, including Mushtaaque Ali Ahmad Khan, M. Ameen Bhat, Manzoor A. Mir, Prof Sowkat Shafi, and Shabbeer Mujahid. The event was graced by Chief Guest, Sayed Humayun Qaisar.Zahoor Sultan and Nusrat Ara from JKAACL Also present in the seminar. The speakers emphasized the significance of theatre in promoting cultural heritage, social awareness, and emotional intelligence. They also stressed the need for collective efforts to revive interest in theatre among the younger generation.

The seminar was attended by a good number of theatre lovers and artists, who actively participated in the discussions and shared their insights.

This event marked a crucial step towards reinvigorating the theatre scene and fostering a deeper appreciation for this art form.

### **PUBLIC NOTICE**

I have Changed my name from Jawahira to JALLA BANO and in future & will be known as JALLA BANO. As I have to change the Same in my Passport also.

W/o Mohammad Sultan Patloo

### PUBLIC NOTICE

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

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

### **PUBLIC NOTICE**

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

> Muneer Ahmad Mir Father of Mudasir Muneer Mir

### **PUBLIC NOTICE**

It is being notified that my name in my Aadhar Card having Aadhar card number this 987574105762 has been wrongly mentioned as Hamna jan my real name is Hamna jahangeer DOB 21/03/2024

C/o Jahangeer Ahmad Rather Adresss: KAWARIGAM HARDUTOORU, achabal anantanag , j&k 192201

### **PUBLIC NOTICE**

My name has been wrongly written as JAWAHIRA in my passport while my correct name is JALLA BANA which needs to be changed if anybody having any objection in this regard he /she may contact with concerned authorities within seven days from the publication of this notice after that no obiection will be entertained.

> Name...JALLA BANO W/O MOHAMMAD SULTAN PATHROO **RAINAWARI SRINAGAR**

### **PUBLIC NOTICE**

I HAVE CHANGED THE NAME OF MY SON NAMELY SYED MUBEEN TO SYED MUBEEN KAMILI S/O BASHARAT SYED KAMILI R/O H. NO 2, LANE F, HABIB COLONY, BAGHAT BARZULLA SRINAGAR AS THE SAME NEEDS TO BE INCORPORATED IN THE SCHOOL RECORDS. ANY OBJECTION TO THE SAME MAY BE CONVEYED TO THE PRINCIPAL DELHI PUBLIC SCHOOL, **BUDGAM WITHIN SEVEN DAYS FROM PUBLICATION** 

> Name:-BASHARAT SYED KAMILI F/O SYED MUBEEN KAMILI R/O H. NO 2, LANE F, HABIB COLONY, **BAGHAT BARZULLA SRINAGAR**

### **PUBLIC NOTICE**

It is inform to all general public notice that i ashiq Hussain bhat s/o mohammad ramzan R/O Kripal pora bala that my son Rouf ali bhat is born on 09-06-2014 if any body have any objection regarding issuance of date of birth certificate he she the contect of bdo singpora with in period of seven days

### **PUBLIC NOTICE**

It is inform to all general public through the meduim Of notice that i sywd showkat s/o Aesa shah R/o Harinara that my son namely syed Aamir shah s/o syed showkat shah r/o Harinara is born 05-12-2010 if any body have any objection regarding issuance of date of birth certificate he she the contect of Bdo singpora with in period of seven days

### **PUBLIC NOTICE**

It is inform to all general public notice that i afshana Bano w/o ashiq Hussain shugnoo R/o diver yakman pora that my both sons namely 1sania zehra D-O-B is 11-07-2018 2 Danish ali 24-02-2019 3 irfan ali 02-03 -2022 s/o ashiq Hussain shugnoo if any body have any obection regarding issuance of D-o-b certicate he she the contect of BDO singpora with in period of seven days

### **PUBLIC NOTICE**

It is inform to all general public through the medium of notice that imphammad ibrahim bhat s/o asgar bhat R/o Harinara that my father asgar bhat is passed away on 17-07-2002 if any body have any objection regarding issuance of death certicate he she the contect of BDO singpor with in period of seven days

### **PUBLIC NOTICE**

It is inform to all general bublic notice that i Hamid ali Bhat s/o ghulam Hassan bhat R/o Harinara that my father Gh HassN bhat is passed away on 05-03-2003 if any body have any objection regarding issuance of death certicate He she the contect of BDO sinpora with in period of seven days

### **PUBLIC NOTICE**

It is inform to all general public through medium of notice that i mohammad ibrahim bhat and Hamid bhat resident of Harinara that my aunt khatooni D/o assad bhat is passed on05-12-1983 if any body have any objection regarding ispora with in period of seven days

OFFICE OF THE TEHSILDAR KREERI

**PUBLIC NOTICE** 

The Registrar Births and Deaths (Block Development Officer Wagoora)/ hassubmitted case file pertaining chokedar to Birth of FURQAN FAROOQ S/O FAROOQ AHMAD DAR R/O Tehsil KREERI Distt. Baramulla having verified the SALOOSA date of Birth as 05/03/2006 and event has been shown to be occured at HOME for issuance of delay order . In this connection if anyone have any objection to the issuance of delay order of Birth certificate shall present his/her claim this office within 07 days, after that no objection shall be entertained

Executive Magistrate 1st Class KREERI

**HT-KASHMIR** 

## Dr Jitendra Announces Regional Biotech Centres Across India To Accelerate StartUps, Biomanufacturing

#### HT News Network

NEW DELHI, Mar 28: At a highlevel meeting of the Department of Biotechnology, Union Minister Dr. Jitendra Singh announced the creation of Regional BIRAC (Biotechnology Industry Research Assistance Council) Centres across India, in collaboration with States, to accelerate StartUps and biomanufacturing, and thus harness the biotech potential in different parts of the country. Dr. Jitendra Singh, Minister of State (Independent Charge) Science & Technology; MoS PMO, Personnel, Public

Grievances, Pensions, Atomic Energy and Space emphasized the need for comprehensive mapping of states based on their biotech potential and directed the department to collaborate with them in establishing Bio E3 (Economy, Environment and Employment)Cells highlighting that Assam is the first state to establish a dedicated BIOE3 cell. These specialized cells will provide necessary support for fostering innovation, entrepreneurship, and scaling up biotech ventures.

Recognizing the critical role of Start-Ups in advancing biomanufacturing, Dr. Jitendra Singh called for enhanced



handholding and incubator support to encourage new-age biotech entrepreneurs. He highlighted the importance of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in biomanufacturing and bio foundries, ensuring global investment to drive India's biotech revolu-

Dr. Jitendra Singh stressed that the Tripartite arrangement—a synergy between Research Infrastructure, Startups, and Industrial R&D-is the way forward for India's biotech sector. He directed the department to prioritize setting up Core R&D Facilities equipped with state-of-the-art biomanufacturing capabilities to facilitate pilot validation, upscaling, and commercialization of promising biotech innovations.

Recalling the Centre-State Partnership Summit held in Delhi, Dr. Jitendra Singh reiterated the Governbiotech revolution across states through collaboration, knowledgesharing, and technical assistance. He noted that several states have expressed interest in setting up Biotechnology Parks, further strengthening India's bio-economy.

The Science & Technology Minister underscored the significance of regenerative technologies, directing the department to prioritize their promotion within India's biomanufacturing landscape. He urged officials to partner with industry leaders to replicate the success of India's Space Sector in biotech.

## With 18K MW potential, J&K harnesses only 3.5K MW HP

#### **■** HT News Network

JAMMU, Mar 28: Bizarre it may sound but is a truth that the Jammu and Kashmir Union Territory (UT) has badly failed to harness maximum of its 18000 MW of the estimated Hydel Power (HP) potential and has only successfully harnessed a meagre of 3540.15 MW of it till date due to which power crisis has badly hit the UT.

Of the 18000 MW of estimated Hydel Power (HP) potential in J&K, only 14867 MW has been identified so far which included 11283 MW from Chenab basin, 3084 MW from Jhelum basin and 500 MW from Ravi basin.

More surprising is that full harnessing from these three sources-Chenab basin, Jhelum basin and



Ravi basin has also not been made possible so far as from Chenab basin only 2033.05 MW hydel power is being harnessed while from Jhelum basin it is 1378.1 MW and 129 MW of the HP is being harnessed from Ravi basin. This information was revealed in reply to a Starred Question from an MLA in the ongoing budget session of the J&K Legisla-The reply further stated

that the authorities concerned in J&K have taken effective steps to fast-track the harnessing of balance hydro-power potential by allocating the execution of Hydroelectric Projects (HEPs) to a number of agencies like National Hydroelectric Power Corporation (NHPC), joint venture companies namely Chenab Valley Power Projects Private Limited (CVPPPL) and Ratle Hydroelectric Power Corporation Limited (RHP-

CL) and Independent Power Producers apart from UT Government's fully owned generation company Jammu & Kashmir State Power Development Corporation Limited (JKSPDC)."

Also 15 projects aggregating 7768 MW of HP are at various stages of implementation of which 6 projects aggregating 3063.5 MW are in construction stage, 2 projects aggregating 141 MW are at award stage and 7 projects aggregating 4563.5 MW are at

DPR/clearance stage. In order to harness hydropower in the Chenab basin which accounts for 76 per cent of the identified Hydel-potential of the UT, JKSPDC has constituted Joint Venture (JV) companies with NHPC viz., CVP-PL and RHPCL.

### Karra terms terror situation grim in Jammu region ,lauds bravery of security forces

Centre's normalcy claims misleading ,needs more effective strategy: JKPCC Chief

#### **HT News Network**

Srinagar March 28: Paving rich tributes to the martyred policemen who laid down their lives while bravely fighting the militants in Kathua area, since last night , JKPCC Chief Tariq Hameed Karra has termed the terror situation in parts of Jammu as grim and demanded more effective strategy to deal with the deteriorated situation in the region. Strongly condemning the terror incident in Kathua district, JKPCC Chief expressed great shock over loss of precious lives of security forces in the gun battle, while lauding the bravery of the forces who eliminated three terrorists in the encounter.Karra expressed great concern over the grim situation, in



various parts of Jammu region,he said that the baloon of false & misleading claims of normalcy by centre government, stands burst due to series of terror incidents in Jammu region in the recent past but the centre remains in denial

mode to divert attention of

the nation.The centre gov-

ernment ignored the warning signals and ignored the voice of people from ground,leading to deterioration of the situation,he

Joined by several senior leaders from the district including Ch Lal Singh, Dr Manohar Lal Sharma, DCC President Pankaj Dogra, Ex MLA Durga Dass, Naresh Sharma,, Kajal Rajput, Rakesh Chaudhary, Nirdosh Sharma & ors,Karra demanded more effective strategy to control the situation by taking active cooperation of people and the elected

representatives,JKPCC Chief asked the centre government to accept the ground reality and the challenge, in order to control the situation.

They said that the situation is worst in the district and there is fear amongst the common people due to series of incidents including mysterious disappearance & killings ,while the police is clueless, which makes things more serious.

They conveyed deep sympathies with the families of those martyred and injured and prayed for early recovery.

### **Thousands Rally in Magam on Al-Quds Day, Calling for Palestinian Liberation**

**■** HT News Network

Budgam, Mar 28, KNT: Magam Town in Central Kashmir's Budgam witnessed a massive gathering on the last Friday of Ramazan, observed as Al-Quds Day, as thousands of fasting Muslims took to the streets in a show of solidarity with Palestine. The demonstration, which saw significant participation from women and members of the Shia community, was marked by fervent calls for the liberation of Masjid-al-Aqsa and an end to Israeli control over Palestinian territories.

Protesters moved through the bustling Magam bazar, raising pro-Palestine slogans and condemning what they described as Zionist occupation. Public addresses during the march strongly criticized the international community's perceived silence on the situation in Gaza, where demonstrators alleged ongoing atrocities against Palestinians. The annual observance of Al-Quds Day, originally initiated to express support for Palestinian resistance, has gained traction in various parts of the world, including Kashmir. For many participants, the event carried both religious and political significance, intertwining their faith with advocacy for global justice. Given the region's own socio-political history, the rally in Magam also reflected broader sentiments regarding identity, human rights, and international policies on conflict zones.

### Govt exempts stamp duty on property transfers within blood relations

**■** HT News Network

Srinaga, Mar 28(KNO): The Jammu and Kashmir government has waived stamp duty on property transfers through Gift Deeds within blood relations.

Notably, the stamp duty on property transfers within blood relations is a tax levied on gifting property between close family members.

The exemption, notified under S.O. 75 by the Finance Department, will come into effect from April 1, 2025. According to the notification, a copy of which lies with the news agency-Kashmir News Observer (KNO), the stamp duty waiver applies to transfers between father, mother, brother, sister, son, daughter, grandfather, grandmother, grandson, and granddaughter.

The order, issued under clause (a) of Section 9 of the Stamp Act, 1977 (XL of 1977), states that the government took this decision in the public interestThe exemption, notified under S.O. 75 by the Finance Department, will come into effect from April 1, 2025.

According to the notification, a copy of which lies with the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO)

### **MLA Nizamuddin Bhat Reviews Developmental Progress at HKM Degree College**

■ HT News Network

Bandipora, March 28: MLA Nizamuddin Bhat visited HKM Degree College Bandipora yesterday,where he was warmly received by the college administration.The visit focused on assessing the institution's academic and infrastructural progress, addressing key concerns raised by the staff.

During the discussions, a detailed presentation was given on the ongoing developmental projects of the college. Challenges such as the shortage of permanent teaching staff, which has affected academic



continuity and the need for introducing new subjects in line with modern educational demands were highlighted.

The improvement of student facilities, particularly transportation, was another major issue discussed. The staff also apprised Nizamuddin Bhat of various difficulties they face in daily operations. Responding

promptly, Bhat immediately took up the issues with the concerned authorities, assuring that necessary steps would be taken for resolution.

Bhat, highlighted the importance of faculty recruitment, infrastructure enhancement and stronger collaboration between the college, government and community to ensure sustainable academic growth. His visit not only provided an in-depth review of the institution's progress but also laid the groundwork for future improvements, reinforcing HKM Degree College's role as a center of educational excellence in Bandipora.

### **Srinagar Police** observes Thana Diwas

HT News Network

SRINAGAR, MARCH 28:March 28: As a part of public outreach programme of J&K Government, police in Srinagar observed 'Thana Diwas' across various Police Stations and Police Posts of the city.

In the 2nd phase for the month of March 2025, the event was organized in (15) Police Stations of the district which include PS Harwan, PS Parimpora, PS M.R.Gunj, PS Rainawari, PS Nishat, PS Rajbagh, PS Zadibal, PS Sadder, PS Shaheed Gunj, PS Soura, PS Nigeen, PS Batmaloo, PS Masiuma, PS Kothibagh

and PS R.M.Bagh. The meetings were chaired by

supervisory officers & jurisdictional police officers and were attended by civil society members including members of Augaf Committees, members of Traders Federation and Transporters, Panchayti Raj members, Religious Preachers, Mohallah elders etc.

Pertinently, SSP Srinagar Shei Imtiyaz Mir JKPS presided a meeting in City East Zone attended by SP East and other officers of Police. The participants highlighted various issues of public importance and put forth their grievances which were within the domain of district police like illegal narcotics trafficking, sand mafia, traffic issues, floating population etc.

## Renewal & new arm licence process should not be delayed at any cost: Dr Abhijeet Jasrotia

HT News Network

Srinagar, Mar 28: Expressing deep concern over the heinous terrorists' act by the stooges of Pakistan which claimed the precious lives of our brave police personnel, Dr. Abhijeet Singh Jasrotia batted for the renewal and the issuing of new arm licenses to the appropriate people who fulfil all the norms and regulations.

Dr. Abhijeet Jasrotia, Spokesperson, J&K BJP accompanied by Dr. Pardeep Mahotra, Media Incharge, J&K BJP and Parduman Singh, senior leader, asked for the strengthening of second line of defense in the region in a press conference held at BJP headquarters, Trikuta Nagar, Jammu.

Dr. Abhijeet Singh Jasrotia, said that the brave police personnel made the supreme sacrifice in the encounter at Jathana, Kathua. He said that our forces also neutralized many terrorists in the encounter and praised them for the valiance and the effort.



He said that the irreparable loss to the martyrs' families cannot be filled, but the activists of BJP will always be present beside them. He praised the security personnel for their spirit of sacrifice and said that this essence keeps saving us from the nefarious designs of Pakistan. "Due to the extreme pressure by the Indian security forces, Pakistan is trying to modify its terrorism strategy and shift focus from Kashmir to the other parts,

our forces are fully capable to respond effectively to this evil design by the stringent measures like Balakot", said Dr. Abhijeet Jasrotia.

He requested the people of Kathua to show their unity to fail the nefarious designs of Pakistan and its sponsored terrorists. He said that the history reminds us that the people of Kathua successfully thwarted the attempts of Turks, and Mongols and other invaders with their

unity and valiance. He further requested the people to be alert to notice any unscrupulous element/movement and report them to the security agencies, while terming this as a battle of everyone. He made a fervent appeal to the administration for the renewal and the issuing of new arm licenses to the eligible persons, who have fulfilled all the regulations and the necessary formalities have been checked. He said that the whole essential process of renewal and the issuance of new licences should not be disturbed due to the fault of certain tainted persons which is endangering the lives of common people as a result.

Dr. Abhijeet Jasrotia was also very vocal to attack the regional political parties of Jammu & Kashmir for their insensitivity on the issue, not condemning Pakistan for the heinous acts resulting in the martyrdom, and instead favouring dialogue with the terrorist nation. He added that India follows the policy of 'terrorism and talks cannot go together' and no such act will go unavenged.





### **JKPICCA President Bashir Ahmad Naik Extends Eid-ul-Fitr Greetings to Muslims**

#### **■** HT News Network

KISHTWAR, MARCH 27: The District Administration Kishtwar organised an Iftaar party to celebrate the spiritual bliss of the holy month of Ramadan, signifying peace, harmony and brotherhood.

The event, held here at the TRC, was hosted by Deputy Commissioner (DC) Rajesh Kumar Shavan. The Iftaar Party provided a momentous opportunity to individuals from different walks of life, including government functionaries from the District Administration, Army, Police, CRPF, Retired Officers, prominent Citizens from Civil Society, media personnel and employees from different departments, to come together and share a meal.

The Iftaar Party aimed to foster a sense of unity, camaraderie, and togetherness among the district administration and the citizens of Kishtwar in the holy month of Ramadan. The DC extended warm wishes to all present and underscored the profound significance of Ramadan in promoting peace, compassion, and goodwill within society.

He highlighted the importance of such events in bringing together people of diverse backgrounds and faiths in a spirit of mutual respect and understanding. This collective moment of reflection reinforced the administration's commitment to inclusivity, unity, and working together for the betterment of the district.

### **Aga Syed Hassan criticizes Arab** leaders, accusing them of compromising Palestinian cause

#### **■** HT News Network

Srinagar, Mar 28, J&K Anjuman Sharie Shian president Aga Syed Hassan Mosavi has urged Muslims worldwide to stand in solidarity with Palestinians against what he described as Israel's Zionist and colonial oppression.

In a statement, Aga Hassan condemned Israel's actions in Palestine, calling them an extension of colonialism and apartheid. He accused Israel of forcibly occupying Palestinian land through ethnic cleansing, violence, and demographic changes.

"The first wave of Palestinian expulsion in 1948 was only the beginning, followed by multiple displacements, all aimed at enforcing an oppressive system. The ultimate goal is to Judaize Al-Quds by erasing its Islamic, Arabic, and Christian identity,' he stated.

 $Leading \, a \, solidarity \, rally, Aga \, Hassan \, asserted \, that \,$ Israel's policies in Al-Quds violate international law and UN resolutions that recognize Palestinian rights. He lamented that for decades, the Arab world has been caught in turmoil, with its people facing uncertainty and instability.

He further criticized Arab leaders, alleging that they have compromised the Palestinian cause in exchange for political survival. "Many Arab regimes have prioritized their own power over supporting Palestinian resistance. Instead of challenging Israeli occupation, they have become its protectors, aligning their interests with Israel's," he claimed. Aga Hassan also warned against growing Arab-Israeli ties, saying some nations were normalizing relations with Israel for economic and military alliances. He pointed to an emerging regional axis involving Egypt, Saudi Arabia, the UAE, and Israel, allegedly formed to counter Iran, which they perceive as a common adversary. [KNT]

### **Several Flights Cancelled At Srinagar Airport Due To Strong Winds**

#### **■** HT News Network

SRINAGAR, Mar 28: Several flights at the Srinagar airport were either cancelled, diverted or delayed due to speedy winds, officials said.

They said nine flights were cancelled, while two were diverted due to strong winds caused by steep pressure gradient. Several other flights were delayed, they added. Strong gusty winds blew in most parts of the Valley over the last 24 hours. At some places, the winds caused damage to buildings and vehicles, officials said.

## DC inspects beautification works in Kishtwar Town **Inaugurates Selfie Point at Historical Qilla Top**

**HT-JAMMU** 

#### **HT News Network**

@HEADLINESTODA17

KISHTWAR, MARCH 28: Deputy Commissioner Rajesh Kumar Shavan today inaugurated a Selfie Point here at the historical Qilla Top under the #KISHTWAR. initiative. The site, aimed at adding to the town's tourism attraction and beautification, has been executed by the Municipal Council at an estimated cost of Rs. 4 lakh.

The Selfie Point is part of the broader Town Beautification Project designed to uplift the aesthetic value of Kishtwar Township and promote its rich historical significance.

The DC appreciated the efforts of the Municipal Council for their work. He also directed KDA authorities to ensure regular maintenance of the park at Qilla Top to preserve its beauty for visitors.

Later, the DC also inaugurated fountains at Hidyal Chowk and Shaheedi Mazaar, further adding to the beautification of Kishtwar town.



town, holds immense historical imporand palace built during the reign of the

Qilla Top, located southwest of Kishtwar tance. The hillock was once home to a fort

Rajas of Kishtwar, notably by Raja Kahan Paul. Over time, the fort and palace have disappeared, leaving behind the throne made of stone and two preserved guns, locally known as 'TOPE,' as remnants of the site's regal history.

The DC also inaugurated the Prefabricated Tehsildar's residence building constructed by the Mechanical and Hospital Sub- Division Kishtwar within the premises of the Tehsildar's office. The building has been built at an estimated cost of Rs. 15 lakh.

Earlier, the DC inspected the ongoing retrofitting work at the HRT Lift Scheme of the Jal Shakti Department for the Town. The DC directed ExEn PHE, to complete the work in a time bound manner.

The DC was accompanied by Executive Officer Municipal Council Mirza Mumtaz Iqbal; ExEn Jal Shakti, Sunil Sharma; Executive Engineer PWD, Ravinder Kumar; AEE Mechanical and Hospital Sub-Division Kishtwar and other officers and concerned staff members.

### **Court Summons Facebook Hawkers Over Viral Video, Raises Concerns About Credibility of Journalism in Kashmir**

#### **HT News Network**

Srinagar, Mar 28, KNT: The rampant presence of Facebook or Social Media hawkers on social networking sites has raised serious concerns about the credibility of journalism in Kashmir, with many unverified platforms tarnishing the image of professional

In a recent case, nine Facebook page administrators were summoned by the Sopore Court for uploading a controversial video that allegedly defamed an individual.

The summoned social media hawkers include Kashmir Network, Viral Kashmir Bazar, Awantipora Pulwama, Angel Aqsa, Sadaye Kashmir, Dar Towseef, Bhat Rahil, Javid Ahmad Reshi, and JK Taza News.

The case pertains to a viral video



showing Zahid Gani Mirchal, a resident of Tujjar Sharif, Sopore, being beaten and humiliated by a woman who accused him of duping her brother and extorting money. These Facebook hawkers uploaded the video across multiple platforms, prompting the accused in the video to approach the court through his legal counsel, alleging that his reputation had been tarnished. Taking cognizance of the matter, the Sopore Court issued summons to all nine individuals involved, with the next hearing scheduled for May 14, 2024. Meanwhile, Burhan Hussaini, the admin of Kashmir Bulletin, expressed dismay over being wrongly summoned, stating that a fake Facebook page using the same name-'Kashmir Bulletin'-had uploaded the video. He urged authorities and the complainant to identify and penalize the real culprits behind the fake page instead of targeting his legitimate news platform.

The incident has once again highlighted the growing trend of unregulated Facebook pages posing as news sources, often publishing unverified and defamatory content without ethical considerations. Observers say such reckless behavior by social media hawkers has significantly damaged the credibility of journalism in Kashmir, with genuine journalists.

### **JMC launches drive to ensure** hygienic, quality food on Eid

**■** HT News Network

JAMMU, MARCH 28: With Eid celebrations around the corner, Jammu Municipal Corporation has launched a comprehensive drive to ensure quality mutton for the public. The



initiative aims to guarantee safe and hygienic mutton and poultry supply, giving citizens a worry-free and joyful Eid experience.

On Directions of Commissioner JMC, Dr. Devansh Yadav, a team of the Veterinary Section headed by Dr. Gourav Chowdhary, conducted surprise inspections of meat markets across the city. The inspection focused on verifying the authenticity of meat, checking for any signs of disease or contamination, and ensuring compliance with food safety standards.

During the drive, 11 mutton shops were penalised and directions were issued to all shops to abide by food safety norms for health and safety of consumers.

JMC's drive will continue till the end of Eid celebrations and citizens' complaints will also be addressed through online and offline modes.

### DC Rajouri suspends Khilafwarzi **Inspector for dereliction of Duty**

#### HT News Network

RAJOURI, MARCH 28: Deputy Commissioner Abhishek Sharma has placed Khilafwarzi Inspector (Enforcement Officer) under suspension for not reporting violation of building permission in Phalliana-Rajouri. The action follows complaints and a reference from the Army regarding violations of the Works of Defence Act (WODA) in the area. To assess the extent of the violations, the Assistant Commissioner Revenue (ACR) and Tehsildar, under order No. OQ/2024-25/2129 dated 27.03.2025, were directed to conduct a site inspection and submit a report.

The report submitted by the team of officers revealed unauthorized construction exceeding the permitted limit by 8,787 sq. ft. and the illegal conversion of a residential area into a commercial space.

As the Enforcement Officer of the Municipal Council was responsible for monitoring and reporting such violations, his failure to take appropriate action or report the matter has been deemed a serious lapse in duty. In view of this, the DC placed him under suspension with immediate effect and attached him to the office of the DSEO.

The Executive Officer Municipal Council has been directed to submit a detailed explanation within three days and take immediate action against the violations as per the law.

Furthermore, the District Statistics & Evaluation Officer has been appointed as the Inquiry Officer and asked to submit a comprehensive report within 30 days.

The district administration

### **Workshop cum awareness programme on** PMAY-G, Awaas Plus 2.0 held in Udhampur

### **HT News Network**

UDHAMPUR, MARCH 28: Department of Rural Development & Panchayati Raj today organized a one-day workshop cum awareness programme on Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana-Gramin and Awaas Plus 2.0 here in the Conference Hall DC Office Complex.

Additional Deputy Commissioner Prem Singh was the chief guest, while Assistant Commissioner Development Dr Ranjit Singh Kotwal presided over the programme. He welcomed the chief guest and informed that the objective of the programme was to enhance awareness, gather feedback and strategize for the effective execution of PMAY-G scheme. Speaking at the workshop, the ADC highlighted that welfare schemes can only be successful when people actively embrace and participate in the implementation process. He stressed that the purpose of the workshop was to ensure that

all eligible and deserving beneficiaries are registered in the ongoing Awaas Plus 2.0 survey. He directed RDD officials to ensure the geo-tagging of all works executed under the scheme for transparency and accountability. A documentary ighlighting achievements of the Rural Development Department under PMAY-G, success stories of beneficiaries and various technical features available in the Awaas App was also screened.Later, the Officials gave a detailed presentation covering key aspects viz Evolution of Rural Housing Schemes, aims & objectives of PMAY-G, eligibility criteria for beneficiaries, challenges faced in Udhampur District in registering beneficiaries and the strategizes to overcome these challenges

The workshop concluded with an interactive session, where field staff shared their experiences, discussed challenges in implementation and explored solutions to improve the execution of the scheme.

### JK Contractors Coordination Committee Chairman Jeelani Purza Welcomes J&K Govt for Settling Current Financial Year's Pending Bills JKCCC Thanks CM Omar Abdullah and Finance Department Officials for Swift Action

#### ■ HT News Network

Srinagar, 28 Mar, 2025: The Jammu and Kashmir Contractors Coordination Committee (JKCCC) has warmly welcomed the J&K Government's significant step to clear longpending payments owed to contractors. This development follows repeated appeals from the contractor community to the administra-

In a statement to the press, JKCCC Chairman Ghulam Jeelani Purza said that contractors have long suffered due to delayed payments for completed infrastructure and public works projects. These delays created serious financial hardships and hampered the pace of development across the region.

Purza highlighted that treasuries had been

overwhelmed with pending bills, drawing concern over the financial management and efficiency of fund disbursement. He credited the government's recent action as a major relief for the contractor community.

Last year, many contractor payments had lapsed due to delays and administrative bottlenecks. However, this year, under the direct intervention of J&K Chief Minister Omar Abdullah—who also holds the Finance portfolio—a strict order was issued to ensure that all bills are cleared before 31st March 2025. Treasuries were even instructed to remain open on holidays to facilitate timely clearances.

As per the latest update, all pending bills up to 20th March 2025 have been cleared. JKCCC hopes that the remaining payments will also



be cleared before the financial year closes on 31st March 2025.

The JKCCC leadership also met twice with

the Director of Accounts & Treasuries, who assured them that all pending payments would be addressed in time.

Responding to earlier appeals from the JKCCC, the government—led by Chief Minister Omar Abdullah—took decisive steps to expedite payment clearances. The Finance Department, Director of Treasuries, and Commissioner Secretary to the Finance Department played pivotal roles in ensuring the smooth release of funds.

Chairman Purza expressed heartfelt gratitude to J&K Chief Minister Omar Abdullah for his leadership and proactive approach in addressing the crisis. He also thanked the

Director of Treasuries, Finance Department's Commissioner Secretary and other key officials for their timely coordination.

He further acknowledged the support of trade associations, social organizations and political leaders whose collective efforts helped bring attention to the issue and paved the way for a resolution.

"This development reaffirms the government's commitment to uplifting the contractor community and accelerating the infrastructure growth of Jammu and Kashmir," Purza said. "We hope this momentum continues to ensure a transparent, responsive and efficient system for all stakeholders." Chairman Purza also raised another important concern regarding the long-pending payments under the Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM),

**CMYK** 



## Federal Judge temporarily blocks parts of Trump's anti-DEI executive orders

#### HT News Network

CHICAGO, Mar 28: A federal Judge has temporarily blocked the US Department of Labour from implementing parts of President Donald Trump's executive orders aimed at curbing diversity, equity and inclusion efforts among federal contractors and grant recipients.

Judge Matthew Kennelly of the US District Court for the Northern District of Illinois halted the Labor Department from requiring federal contractors or grant recipients from certifying that they don't operate any programmes in violation of Trump's anti-DEI executive orders.

That certification provision has stepped up pressure on companies and other organisations to revisit their DEI practices because if the government were to determine they violated the provision, they would be subject to crippling financial penalties under the False Claims Act. Thursday's ruling is in response to a



lawsuit filed by Chicago Women in Trades, a nonprofit founded in 1981 that helps prepare women for work in skilled construction trades and has several contracts

with the Department of Labour. There was no immediate reaction from Chicago Women in Trades to Kennelly's order. The Department of Justice did not immediately respond to requests for comment.

A hearing on Chicago Women in Trades' bid for a longer-lasting halt on Trump's

anti-DEI executive orders is scheduled for April 10.

**HT-WORLD** 

The organization's lawsuit is one of several challenging Trump's executive orders targeting DEI programmes in both the private and public sectors.

Trump signed an order his first day in office directing federal agencies to terminate all "equity-related" grants or contracts. He signed a follow-up order that included a requirement that federal contractors and grantees certify that they don't "operate any programs promoting DEI that violate any applicable Federal anti-discrimination laws."

Kennelly's decision comes nearly two weeks after an appeals court lifted a broader nationwide injunction against Trump's anti-DEI executive orders in a separate lawsuit in Baltimore. But Thursday's ruling is limited in scope because Kennelly declined to extend the temporary restraining order to other federal

### **Nuke talks with US under** military threats "meaningless": Iran FM

#### HT News Network

TEHRAN, Mar 28: Iranian Foreign Minister Seyed Abbas Araghchi said Thursday that holding direct negotiations with the United States under maximum pressure and military threats from Washington is "meaningless."

He made the remarks in a phone call with British Foreign Secretary David Lammy. Araghchi, however, voiced Tehran's readiness to pursue a diplomatic approach to the nuclear issue.Iran has responded through Oman to a letter sent by U.S. President Donald Trump seeking negotiations with Tehran on its nuclear program, Araghchi said.Trump told Fox Business Network in early March that he had sent a letter to Iran's leadership proposing negotiations for a new nuclear deal.

The Iranian foreign minister said Thursday that the official response from his country included a letter that "thoroughly" explained Iran's viewpoints on the ongoing situation and on Trump's letter. Araghchi and Lammy exchanged views on Tehran's nuclear program, bilateral issues, as well as the latest developments in West Asia and the world, according to a statement released by the Iranian Foreign Ministry. Referring to the four rounds of talks held in recent months between Iran and the E3 group of France, Britain and Germany on various issues,  $including Tehran's \, nuclear \, program, Araghchi \, expressed$ disappointment over certain "unconstructive" actions and positions of some European states and the European Union, including the imposition and continuation of various sanctions against Iran under false pretexts.

### More journalists detained by Turkiye in dawn raids after covering anti-government protests

#### **HT News Network**

ISTANBUL, Mar 28: Two journalists were detained in dawn raids in Istanbul early Friday as part of a crackdown on media workers covering Turkey's largest protests in more than a decade, their outlets reported.

Elif Bayburt, who works for the Etkin News Agency, and Nisa Suda Demirel, from the Evrensel news website, were the latest to be arrested in early morning sweeps that have targeted political activists and trades' unionists as well as

"Our reporter, Nisa Sude Demirel, was detained by the police who came to her house at around 6 am this morning," Evrensel said in a statement. "Demirel, who was following the (Istanbul City Hall) protests and the boycotts at the universities,



was taken to the Istanbul Police Department's Counter-Terrorism Branch office."The demonstrations began last week following the arrest of Istanbul's opposition Mayor Ekrem Imamoglu, a key rival to President Recep Tayyip Erdogan. Imamoglu was jailed pending trial on corruption charges many see as politically motivated.  $The \, government \, in sists \, the \,$ judiciary is independent

and free of political inter-

ference.Reporters Without

reporters' arrests. "There is no end to the detentions of journalists," its Turkiye representative Erol

Onderoglu said. The Turkish Journalists' Union called for the news media to be allowed to do its work and an "end to

these unlawful detentions." Earlier this week, 11 journalists were detained in morning raids. Although initially jailed pending trial, they were freed Thursday but still face charges of "taking part in illegal rallies and marches."

Turkiye's broadcasting authority issued a 10-day airwave ban on Sozcu TV on Thursday, as well as fines and programme suspensions to other opposition channels. A reporter from the UK's BBC was also deported Thursday.

Children being treated like terrorists'

Courthouses across Turkiye are dealing with a spike in cases as a result of the protests. Interior Minister Ali Yerlikaya said Thursday that nearly 1,900 people had been arrested since March 19.

Anxious families have been gathering outside court buildings to await the fate of their loved ones, who police can hold for four days."The youth we call Generation Z are more likely to participate in these protests. They sense that something is wrong," Savas Ozbek, whose daughter was detained Sunday.

### Borders condemned the **Pakistan Govt plans to** counter extremist narratives

### **HT News Network**

through films, dramas

ISLAMABAD, Mar 28: A high-level meeting, chaired by Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, has decided to counter extremist narratives through films and dramas, reinforcing the national stance against terrorism, Geo News reported on Friday. The meeting, held at the Prime Minister's House here on Friday, was attended by civil and military leadership, along with rep $resentatives from \, all \, four \, provinces. Of ficials \, resolved \, to \, expose$ 

the perpetrators of the Jaffar Express attack and to aggressively counter anti-state campaigns on both traditional and digital media, Geo News reported, citing sources. It was agreed that the National Action Plan (NAP) would be utilised to strengthen the national narrative, with authorities directed to develop an active and effective counter-narrative against terrorism and extremism. The participants also decided to prevent the dissemination of content that threatens national security and harmony while ensuring better coordination among provinces. To engage the youth, films and dramas will incorporate national themes to effectively counter extremist propaganda.

Furthermore, digital media will be used to promote pro-state content and combat misinformation, including deepfake content, by providing verified information. The government will also integrate terrorism awareness into the national curriculum to educate future generations about its dangers. The government's initiative comes against the backdrop of rising terrorist attacks in the country, with Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan emerging as the worst-affected provinces.

### **US defence chief says stronger deterrence** needed against China in disputed sea

#### **■** HT News Network



MANILA, Mar 28: US Defence Secretary Pete Hegseth said Friday that the Trump administration would boost military ties with the Philippines to strengthen deterrence against "threats from the communist Chinese" and ensure freedom of navigation in the disputed South China Sea.

 $He gseth \, spoke \, during \, a \, meeting \, with \, President$ Ferdinand Marcos Jr. in the Philippines, his first stop in his first trip to Asia to reaffirm Washington's "ironclad" commitment to the region under Trump. Ahead of the visit, China called the United States a "predator" and an unreliable ally.

Trump's "America First" foreign policy thrust has triggered concerns in Asia about the scale and depth of US commitment to the region.

Hegseth's decision to make the Philippines his first stop in Asia, followed by Japan — both US treaty allies facing territorial disputes with China — was the strongest assurance yet by the US under Trump to maintain a security presence in the

"Deterrence is necessary around the world but specifically in this region, in your country, considering the threats from the communist Chinese," Hegseth told Marcos. "Friends need to stand shoulder to shoulder to deter conflict, to ensure that there is free navigation whether you call it the South China Sea or the West Philippine Sea."

"Peace through strength is a very real thing," Hegseth said. He praised the Philippines for standing "very firm" to defend its interests in the contested waters.

China claims virtually the entire South China Sea, a major security and global trade route. The Philippines, Vietnam, Malaysia, Brunei and Taiwan also have overlapping claims to the resource-rich and busy waters, but confrontations have spiked between Chinese and Philippine coast guard and naval forces in the last two years.

Chinese forces have used powerful water cannons and dangerous maneuvers in the high seas to block what Beijing said were encroachments by Philippine ships into China's waters. Chinese military aircraft have also approached Philippine patrol planes at alarmingly close distance to drive them away from the Scarborough Shoal, a hotly disputed fishing atoll in the disputed waterway.

Under the previous Biden administration, the US has repeatedly warned that it is obligated to help defend the Philippines if Filipino forces, ships and aircraft come under an armed attack in the Pacific, including in the South China Sea.

Hegseth echoed that pledge by expressing "the ironclad commitment" of Trump and him "to the Mutual Defence Treaty and to the partnership."

### **Bangladesh's Chief Adviser Yunus meets Chinese President Xi Jinping**

#### **■** HT News Network

BEIJING, Mar 28: Chinese President Xi Jinping met with Bangladesh's Chief Adviser Muhammad Yunus here on Friday, official media reported. Yunus, on a four-day visit to China, took part in the country's Boao Forum for Asia Annual Confer-

ence in Hainan after his arrival there on Wednes-

day. He arrived in Beijing on Thursday and was received at the airport by Chinese Vice Foreign Minister Sun Weidong. Gearing up for his meeting with Xi, Yunus called on China on Thursday to reduce interest rates for Chinese loans and waive commitment fees on Chinese-funded projects. In his meeting with the Chinese Executive Vice Premier Ding Xuexiang on the sidelines of the Boao Forum for Asia Annual Conference, Yunus sought Chinese support in an array of development projects, Bangladesh media reports said.

He also called for a reduction of interest rates for Chinese loans from three per cent to 1-2 per cent to Bangladesh and sought a waiver of commitment fees on the Chinese-funded projects in Bangladesh. China is Bangladesh's fourth-largest lender after Japan, the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank, with total loans disbursed since 1975 coming to USD 7.5 billion, according to a report in the Daily Star newspaper of Bangladesh.

### King Charles III seen in public one day after hospitalisation for cancer treatment side effects

#### **HT News Network**

LONDON, Mar 28: King Charles III smiled and waved to members of the public Friday as he left his home in London, the day after a brief hospitalization for the side effects from his cancer treatment. The king's appointments for the

day were cancelled following his "short period of observation in hospital" on Thursday, Buckingham Palace said. The king's health has been close-

ly watched ever since early last year when he announced that he had been diagnosed with an undisclosed form of cancer. Charles was seen as he left Clarence House in the back of a black

Tourist Julian Mati said he was relieved to see the king looked

"We were horrified when we heard the news yesterday," Mati said. "We had come down to the palace today to take pictures but we never imagined we would see



the king. To see him smiling and waving, it's such a relief." Charles, 76, stepped away from public engagements for about three months but continued fulfilling state duties, such as reviewing government papers and meeting with the prime min-

Charles' cancer diagnosis has heaped pressure on the British monarchy, which is still evolving after the 70-year reign of the late Queen Elizabeth II.

When he succeeded his mother in September 2022, Charles' task was to demonstrate that the

1,000-year-old institution remains relevant in a modern nation whose citizens come from all corners of the globe. But this task takes much time and energy. Although the duties of a constitutional monarch are largely ceremonial, the royal whirl can be exhausting. Besides the occasional procession in full royal regalia, there are meetings with political leaders, dedication ceremonies and events honouring the accomplishments of British citizens. That added up to 161 days of royal engagements during Charles' first year on the throne.

### Violent earthquakes rock Southeast Asia, prompting evacuations in Thailand and Myanmar

#### HT News Network

BANGKOK, Mar 28: Two violent earthquakes rocked Southeast Asia on Friday, causing buildings in the Thai capital Bangkok to sway and prompting evacuations across the city, as well as in neighbouring Myanmar. The US Geological Survey and Germany's GFZ centre for geosciences said the midday temblor was a shallow 10 kilometers (6.2 miles), with an

epicenter in Myanmar, according to preliminary reports. A second quake, with a magnitude of 6.4, shook the area 12 minutes later.Water from high-rise rooftop pools in Bangkok sloshed over the side as they shook, and debris fell from many buildings.

A video posted on social media right after the quake showed an apartment building under construction collapsing, but it was not immediately possible to verify its authenticity. There were no immediate reports of casu-



alties and Prime Minister Paetongtarn Shinawatra called an emergency meeting to assess the impact of the quake.

The greater Bangkok area is home to more than 17 million people, many of whom live in high-rise apartments. Alarms went off in buildings as the earthquake hit around 1:30 p.m., and startled residents were evacuated down staircases of high-rise condominiums and hotels in densely populated central Bangkok.They remained in the streets, seeking shade from the midday sun in the minutes after the quake. Thailand's Department of Disaster Preventaion said the quake was felt in amost all regions of the country. The epicenter of the earthquake was in central Myanmar, about 50 kilometers (30 miles) east of the city of Monywa. In the capital Naypyitaw, the quake damaged religious shrines, sending parts toppling to the ground, and some homes.

Further reports of damage were not immediately available from Myanmar.



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## **Cabinet clears Electronics Component Mfg Scheme with** a funding of Rs 22,919 cr

NEW DELHI, MAR 28 (UNI)

In view of rising demand for electronic components and to boost its exports, the Government on Friday approved the Electronics Component Manufacturing Scheme with a funding of Rs 22,919 crore to make India Atmanirbhar in electronics supply chain.

This scheme aims to dra Modi. develop a robust component ecosystem by to attract investment of so that they can acquire attracting large invest- Rs 59,350 crore, result in technological capabilities ments (global/domestic) production of Rs 4,56,500 and achieve economies of in electronics component crore worth of compo-scale. manufacturing ecosystem, nents and generate addiincreasing Domestic Value tional direct employment scheme is six (6) years crore in FY 2023-24 at Addition (DVA) by develop- of 91,600 persons and with one (1) year of gestaing capacity and capabili- many indirect jobs as well ties, and integrating Indian during its tenure. companies with Global Value Chains (GVCs), an differentiated incentives with employment targets lakh crore in FY 2014-15 official statement said post to Indian manufacturers achievement. Cabinet meeting chaired tailored to overcome spe-



by Prime Minister Naren- cific disabilities for vari- highest-traded and fastest- than 20 per cent.

ous categories of compo-The scheme envisages nents and sub-assemblies

tion period, it said adding the payout of a part of The scheme provides the incentive is linked

growing industries globally and is expected to play a pivotal role in shaping the global economy and advancing a country's economic and technological development. Since electronics perme-

ates all sectors of economy it has economic and strategic importance. With various initiatives of Gol, the electronics manufacturing sector has witnessed remarkable growth in the last decade. The domestic production of electronic goods has increased from Rs 1.90 lakh crore in FY The tenure of the 2014-15 to Rs 9.52 lakh a CAGR of more than 17 per cent. The exports of electronic goods have also increased from Rs 0.38 to Rs 2.41 lakh crore in FY Electronics is one of the 2023-24 at a CAGR of more

# Removed protesting farmers from Shambhu &

Khanauri borders, Punjab govt informs SC

NEW DELHI, MAR 28 (UNI)

The Punjab Government on Friday informed the Supreme Court that it has removed protesting farmers from the Shambhu and Khanauri borders near Haryana, ensuring free movement on the National Highway.

Advocate General of apprised a Bench comprising Justice Surya Kant highway. and Justice N Kotiswar November last year.

water today and broke his sented the contempt petifast," AG Singh told the tioner. Consequently, the adjourned proceedings

entertain a contempt petition filed against Punjab dropped the contempt the Union Government authorities for allegedly proceedings initiated ear- were ongoing. violating a Supreme Court lier against the Punjab



government to reopen the hunger strike.

Singh that veteran farm- them to open the high- ered Committee, formed ers' leader Jagjit Singh way. The contempt peti- to mediate between the Dallewal ended his hunger tion is misconceived," Jus- government and proteststrike, which began in tice Kant remarked while ing farmers, to submit its "Mr. Dallewal accepted Angrej Singh, who reprethe matter.

Court clarified that it had (DGP) for not hospitalis- to meet Justice (Retired)

Punjab, Gurminder Singh, consistently urged the ing Dallewal during his

The Supreme Court "We have been telling directed the High-Powaddressing Advocate supplementary report on blocked National Highway

Earlier, the Court had petitioner chose to with- after being informed that camp at the borders. The Bench refused to draw the contempt plea. discussions between the Additionally, the Court protesting farmers and and Haryana High Court

In January, a breakstatus quo order by clear- Chief Secretary and the through was achieved ing the protesters. The Director General of Police when the farmers agreed

Nawab Singh, Chairperson of the High-Powered Committee, to negotiate their demands.

On January 22, the Court was informed that Dallewal had accepted medical intervention after talks were initiated regarding the farmers' demands, including statutory protection for the Minimum Support Price (MSP). As his health deteriorated, he was ordered to be shifted to a medical facility.

The farmers began their protest in February last year, demanding legal assurances for MSP. The Haryana Government had borders to prevent the march of farmers toward Delhi, prompting them to

Last year, the Punjab directed the Haryana Government to unblock the Shambhu border, a decision that led the state to approach the Supreme Court for relief.

### Madras HC grants interim anticipatory bail to Kunal Kamra, restrains Mumbai police from arresting him

CHENNAI, MAR 28 (UNI)

The Madras High Court on Friday granted an interim anticipatory bail, while restraining the Mumbai police not to arrest popular stand-up comedian Kunal Kamra in a case relating to his controversial remarks against Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Eknath Shinde.

The 36-year-old comedian had made some slanderous comments against Mr Eknath in his latest comedy show titled him by the Khar Police in Mumbai.



In a petition filed by Kunal seeking an inter- in Mumbai in February he for a considerable number state anticipatory bail to had not named anyone of days in the first three enable him to file a petition leave alone Mr Shinde. weeks of April, he prayed in the Bombay High Court Despite this, a group of the Madras High Court praying for a regular bail, people had attacked and to grant him inter-State 'Naya Bharat', following Mr Justice Sunder Mohan vandalised the venue anticipatory bail till he cases were booked against of Madras HC ordered where he held the show could move the Bombay

The judge also granted at Vanur in Villupuram him anticipatory bail.

issuance of notice to the and the Khar police also Court and obtain regular Mumbai police, returnable registered a FIR against anticipatory bail.

Fearing threats to his life interim anticipatory bail and his family, Kunal said preventing his arrest and he approached the Madras to enable him to move the High Court apprehending Bombay HC, with a condi-that the Mumbai police tion that he should execute would arrest him and suba bond, along with two ject him to physical torture sureties, to the satisfaction if he had to wait until the of the judicial magistrate Bombay High Court grants

Further, pointing out He said in his latest show that the Bombay High 'Naya Bharat' performed Court would be on leave

### Shah approves projects for disaster recovery for Sikkim & strengthening of fire services in 5 states

AGENCIES

NEW DELHI, MAR 28 (UNI)

A high-level Committee Chaired by Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Friday approved projects for disaster recovery and reconstruction activities for Sikkim and for strengthening of fire services in five

The committee, comprising of Finance Minister, Agriculture Minister and Vice Chairman NITI Aayog as members considered these proposals for financial assistance to the states from Recovery and Reconstruction funding window and Preparedness and Capacity Building Funding Window under National Disaster Response Fund (NDRF), a Home Ministry statement said.

approved projects of from earmarked alloca- mittee has also approved the National Disaster Miti-Rs1,604.39 crore for five tion of preparedness and financial assistance of Rs gation Fund (NDMF).

**AGENCIES** 

NEW DELHI, MAR 28 (UNI)



Jharkhand, Maharashtra window under NDRF. and Kerala -- under the scheme "Expansion and ment has allocated a total Modernization of Fire Services in the states".

and Rs 614.09 crore for crore. committee Maharashtra for funding

The Central Governamount of Rs 5,000 crore (SDRF) and Rs 3,229.35 The panel approved Rs sion and Modernization of State Disaster Mitigation 340.90 crore for Bihar, Rs Fire Services in the states", Fund (SDMF). 339.18 crore for Gujarat, Rs and had already approved 147.97 crore for Jharkhand, the proposals of 20 states Rs 5,160.76 crore has been Rs162.25 crore for Kerala for a total of Rs 3,373.12 released to 19 states under

555.70 crore to Sikkim from recovery and reconstruction funding window under NDRF for disaster recovery and reconstruction needs of various sectors affected due to devastating Glacial Lake Outburst Floods (GLOF) occurred in the downstream along the Teesta river basin in October, 2023.

During the current financial year, the Union Government has released Rs 19,074.80 crore to 28 states under the State Disaster Response Fund under NDRF for "Expan-crores to 16 states under

Besides, an amount of the NDRF and Rs 719.71 Moreover, the com- crore to eight states under

### India ready to offer all assistance to quake-hit Myanmar, Thailand: PM

NEW DELHI, MAR 28 (UNI)

Prime Minister Narendra Modi today voiced concern over the situation in the aftermath of a 7.7 magnitude earthquake hitting Myanmar and the strong tremors being felt in Thailand. The PM said India stands ready to offer all assistance.

In a post on X, the PM said he has asked the Indian authorities to be on standby to offer all assistance, and the Ministry of External Affairs to remain in touch Governments of Myanmar damaged in Bangkok, and with the governments of Thailand and Myanmar.

ation in the wake of the earthquake struck central Earthquake in Myanmar, the US Geologiand Thailand. Praying for cal Survey said. the safety and wellbeing of everyone.

offer all possible assistance. In this regard, asked our authorities to be on

"Also asked the MEA to China remain in touch with the



and Thailand." According to the BBC, "Concerned by the situ- a powerful 7.7 magnitude

The epicentre was 16km "India stands ready to city of Sagaing, at a depth next week's BIMSTEC

hundreds of miles away in the heads of government

Buildings have been Modi.

roads have buckled in Myanmar's capital, Naypy-

The Thai government is holding an emergency meeting.

The earthquake and (10 miles) north-west of the damage come ahead of summit in the Thai capital Strong tremors were felt on April 4, which will see Thailand and south-west of the BIMSTEC nations in attendance, including PM

#### Two youths die in road accident in Mahoba

AGENCIES MAHOBA (UP), MAR 28 (UNI)

Two youths were killed when a motorcycle was hit by an unidentified vehicle in Kharela area of Mahoba district in Uttar Pradesh on Friday, a police officer said here.

Additional Superintendent of Police (ASP) Vandana Singh said that Brajendra (23) and his cousin Kamta Kushwaha (28), both residents of Tikri village, had come to Mahoba to buy agricultural equipment. "When they were returning home with the goods in the afternoon, an unidentified vehicle hit them near Rivai and fled," she said.

She said that the youth were badly injured after being hit by the vehicle and fell on the road. "The police took them to the Community Health Centre of Charkhari from where the doctors referred them to the Medical College in a serious condition," she said.



PM Jan Arogya Yojana world's largest

health assurance scheme: Nadda

Hour' in Lok Sabha, Nadda on Socioeconomic Caste people." said, "Initially, it covered Census (SECC) data and 50 crore people, but with the National Food Secu- ally, 37.19 lakh families the inclusion of a decade's rity Act (NFSA), the cover- of Anganwadi workers,

tion during 'Question population growth based age expanded to 55 crore

He added, "Addition-

ASHA workers, and health helpers were included in Ayushman Arogya Yojana.'

Over the conditions of AIIMS in the country, the Union Health Minister said, "PM Modi has opened 22 AIIMS in the country in his tenure and We are not going to compromise with the quality of AIIMS."

Under Pradhan Mantri Swasthya Suraksha Yojana (PMSSY), the government is setting up of 22 new All India Institutes of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) across the country.

### **Actress Preity Zinta received loan** remission by New India Cooperative Bank

AGENCIES

MUMBAI, MAR 28 (UNI)

**Bollywood actress Preity** Zinta received a loan remission by New India Cooperative Bank, sources in the Economic Offences Wing (EOW) of Mumbai police said on Friday.

The EOW is probing into Hiren Bhanu, former chairman of the bank, for allegedly approving loans in return for bribes, as per

The New India Cooperative Bank (NICB) fraud case priation of funds from the involved alleged misappro-



connection with the case. During investigation, it was revealed that the actress benefitted from a

remission on her loan. Police said that on January seven, 2011, a loan of Rs 18 crore was sanc-

tioned to Preity Zinta. The loan was declared a nonperforming asset (NPA) on March 31, 2013. The amount was later settled at Rs 10.74 crore,

and a remission of Rs 1.55 crore was granted to her. The amount was paid on

The city police have April five, 2014, according arrested multiple people in to sources in police.

### Global HIV funding cuts can cause over 10 mn infections, 3 mn deaths by 2030: Lancet

The significant reductions in international funding for HIV prevention and treatment programmes may result in more than 10 million infections, and about 3 million deaths by 2030, according to a study published in The Lancet HIV journal on Thursday.

1-YEAR OF LADLINES

by a team at the Burnet and 2030 if funding cuts funding by 2026. This fol-researchers. lows announced aid cuts tries collectively fund over Donald Trump. 90 per cent of global HIV



deaths in children and The study, conducted adults between 2025 2030, revealed the study.

to 2.9 million HIV-related toward ending HIV/AIDS tute.

as a global health crisis by

"The US has historically Institute in Australia's Mel- proposed by the top five been the largest contribubourne models the impact donor countries, includ- tor to global efforts to treat of a projected 24 per cent ing the US and the UK, are and prevent HIV, but the reduction in global HIV not mitigated," said the current cuts to PEPFAR and USAID-supported The US, the largest programmes have already of 8 per cent to 70 per cent contributor to global HIV disrupted access to essenby key donors, including funding, halted all assis- tial HIV services includthe US, Britain, France, tance on January 20, fol- ing antiretroviral therapy Germany, and the Neth-lowing the swearing-in and HIV prevention and erlands. These five coun- of the new US President testing. Looking ahead, if other donor countries The loss of the Presi-reduce funding, decades dent's Emergency Plan of progress to treat and This could lead to an for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), prevent HIV could be estimated "4.4 to 10.8 mil- combined with other unravelled," said co-lead lion additional new HIV funding cuts, now threat- study author Dr. Debra ten infections and 770,000 ens to reverse progress Brink of the Burnet Insti-

The findings showed that sub-Saharan Africa, and marginalised groups who are already at a higher risk of acquiring HIV, such as people who inject drugs, sex workers, and men who have sex with men, as well as children would be the most affected.

Co-author Dr. Rowan Martin-Hughes from the Institute showed that besides limiting testing and treatment programmes, sub-Saharan Africa would see a cut in broader prevention efforts, such as distributing condoms and offering pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP - a medication that reduces the risk of getting

"It is imperative to secure sustainable financing and avoid a resurgence of the HIV epidemic which could have devastating consequences, not just in regions such as sub-Saharan Africa, but globally," Brink said.

### India among 5 'exemplar countries' in child mortality reduction: UN

NEW DELHI

With better health system investment, including Ayushman Bharat programme, India has been ranked among the five 'exemplar countries' in child mortality reduction, according to a report by the United Nations.

The recent report on Child Mortality Estimation showed that despite facing financial and geographical challenges to service delivery countries like Burundi, Ghana, India, Nepal, and Senegal have accelerated progress in reducing preventable child deaths.

"These countries illustrate that with political will, evidence-based strategies, and sustained investments, even resource-constrained settings facing unique challenges can achieve substantial reductions in preventable child deaths,"



the report said.

from 32 per 1,000 live births in 2018 to 28 per 1000 live births in 2020 (against a target of 28 by the year 2019).

between 2014 and 2020.

India made these gains said. through health system investment.

70 per cent and a neona- maternal and child health decision-making.

enhance available interventions and develop health infrastructure and

As per data from the world's largest health vision and hearing to help Ministry of Health and insurance scheme -- for Family Welfare, Infant providing pregnant nutritional benefits as well as infant care.

"Every pregnant woman said. (in India) is entitled to free delivery (including India's under-5 mortal- caesarean section), and ity rate (U5MR) has signifi- infant care provides free cantly declined, from 45 transport, medications, to 32 per 1,000 live births diagnostics, and dietary The report stated that institutions," the report child health services. In

"Since 2000, India health infrastructure child health indicators are mortality, bringing the achieved an under-five with the establishment of continuously improved to world closer to an end to mortality reduction of "maternity waiting homes, support evidence-based

tal mortality reduction wings, newborn stabilisaof 61 per cent, driven by tion units, sick newborn overlapping measures to care units, mother newincrease health coverage, born care units and a dedicated programme for birth defect screening".

Other interventions human resources," the UN include antenatal corticosteroids for preterm It cited the govern- labour, the use of continument's flagship scheme ous positive airway pres-Ayushman Bharat -- the sure, and follow-up for support newborn survival.

"This ensures millions Mortality Rate reduced women with delivery, and of healthy pregnancies and thriving live births each year," the report

> The country has also prioritised the training and deployment of skilled birth attendants, such as midwives and community health workers, to provide support in public health appropriate maternal and addition, data systems Further, it noted how and digital surveillance of India has strengthened maternal, newborn, and

### Centre releases national guidelines on medical oxygen management

**AGENCIES** 

NEW DELHI

The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare on Thursday released the national guidelines on medical oxygen management.

guidelines, released at a workshop held at the All-India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), Delhi, aim to boost the infrastructure for medical oxygen, as well as to meet any surge

Medical oxygen is an essential clinical need for children and adults with a maintaining and utilising

cant step toward strength- cies," said Punya Salila cal oxygen infrastructure Secretary at the event. and ensuring uniform best practices in oxygen man-need for inculcating learncare facilities.

"It is critical to properly



The oxygen demand range of acute and chronic medical oxygen infra- can rise substantially conditions, as well as for structure so that demands during emergencies, such those undergoing surgery. for any surge capacities as epidemics, pandemics The release of the may be met promptly at like during Covid, and guidelines marks a signifi- the time of any exigen- natural disasters. ening the country's medi- Srivastava, Union Health guidelines provide a capacity-building pro-

shop also marked the launch of the National Capacity Building Programme on Oxygen Management. It will be led by AIIMS' Department of Hospital Administration in collaboration with the Disaster Management Cell of the Health Ministry. It aims to train around

Meanwhile, the work-

200 master trainers across the country which in turn shall undertake capacity building of hospital administrators and medical officers across the country in proper handling and utilization of medical oxygen, reducing wastage and improving clinical outcomes.

"AIIMS will play a key The comprehensive role in spearheading the framework for the effi- gramme," said Prof. M She also stressed the cient procurement, stor- Srinivas, Director, AIIMS, age, and administration of while stressing the imporagement across health- ings from India's manage- medical oxygen. It focuses tance of training and ment of the Covid-19 pan- on patient safety, capacity awareness at all levels of healthcare.

### Surveillance, vigilance necessary to ensure SE Asia remains polio-free: WHO

**AGENCIES** 

NEW DELHI

Surveillance and vigilance are necessary to ensure South-East Asia region remains polio-free, said the World Health Organization on the 11th anniversary of being certified polio-free on Thursday.

Poliomyelitis (polio) is a highly infectious viral disease that largely affects children under 5 years of age. The highly transmissible virus invades the nervous system to cause

In a historic milestone, 11 years ago on March 27, 2014, the WHO South-East Asia Region was certified as free of all types of wild polioviruses.

South-East Asia stated Health Organization in Regional Director said. that eradication of polio 2014. in the SE Asia region was a "daunting and uphill task" effort and innovative strat- importation exists until which can help strengthen said.



Lauding the efforts of health workers, Wazed said they "worked tirelessly to ensure that every child received vaccinathis debilitating disease".

"We honour their contributions and celebrate

that the "work is not over" to continue supporting vigilance to ensure we and "required relentless" as the threat of poliovirus immunisation programme remain polio-free," Wazed

polio is eradicated globally. She stressed the need to boost surveillance.

"A key role in sustaining our 'polio-free' status is played by surveillance and tions to protect against activities, which are indispensable for the detection and ensure that future and prompt interruption generations are free from of poliovirus circulation. the results of their hard We must remain vigilant in surveillance and diseases. Notably, India also immunisation and ensure eradicated polio, and the adequate capacities and this milestone achieve-Saima Wazed, WHO country was declared capabilities at the country ment, we renew our Regional Director for free of polio by the World level are maintained," the pledge to combat all vac-

However, Wazed noted tries and communities ment to surveillance and

our health systems. She also warned against misinformation about vaccines that can harm future gen-

"I am mindful that there is much misinformation and disinformation currently circulating about vaccines and immunisation. I urge you all to help combat this by joining us in spreading the indisputable message that vaccines are safe, and immunisation saves lives.

"We have to build on our successes together the threat of polio and other vaccine-preventable

"On the anniversary of cine-preventable diseases She urged all our coun- and reaffirm our commit-

## High sodium key risk factor for rising obesity levels: Study

NEW DELHI

While sugary foods and beverages are more blamed for the global rise in obesity rates, a new study suggests that sodium -- found in processed meat products, bread, and dairy products, especially cheese -may also be a significant risk factor.

The research presented at the European Congress on Obesity (ECO 2025) highlighted an alarming correlation between sodium intake and obesity, both in terms of overall body fat and abdominal

The study, led by Health Organization. researchers from the Finnobesity status.



were found to exceed the and cancers. recommended sodium intake of 5 grams or less per day -- set by the World

and Welfare in Finland between high dietary abdominal obesity. analysed data from over sodium intake and both hypertension, cardiovas- times more likely to have

Notably, all participants cular diseases, diabetes

building, and emergency

Participants in the highest sodium intake quartile were 4.3 times more likely to be classified as obese The analysis revealed overall and 3.4 times ish Institute for Health strong correlations more likely to suffer from

In the case of men, 5,000 men and women general and abdomithose in the highest quaraged 18 and older, exam- nal obesity, particularly tile of urine sodium conining their sodium intake for women. Both high centration were six times as well as urine sodium sodium and obesity levels more likely to experience about the biological mechconcentration about their are known risk factors for general obesity and 4.7

abdominal obesity.

"In general, men consume more food, and also more foods that are the main food sources of sodium in the diet, such as meat products, bread and bakery products, and cheese. Our analyses were adjusted for total energy intake and therefore the stronger associations in men might be due to the higher salt intake relative to total energy intake. However, regardless of the magnitude of the relationship, the associations were in a similar direction in both men and women," said Annika Santalahti, from the Finnish Institute.

"These results strengthen the evidence of an association between sodium intake and obesity, with similar findings observed for both dietary sodium and urine sodium concentration. It is important to gain more understanding anism of the relationship,"

### IIT Roorkee researchers find natural compound to combat bacterial infections

AGENCIES

A research team at IIT Roorkee has identified a natural compound that can help weaken persistent superbugs and enhance the effectiveness of antibiotics.

The study suggests that thymol -- a plant-based compound commonly found in thyme -- may help weaken persister cells seen particularly in the bacterium Acineto- tions. bacter baumannii. It is known for causing persistent and chronic infections in hospitals.

The findings, published in the Antimicrobial Agents and Chemotherapy Journal, can also make last-resort antibiotics like meropenem more effective.

indicate that thymol, in combination with meropenem, enhances the antibiotic's activity, offering



efficacy of existing antibiotics presents a promising avenue in addressing antimicrobial resistance," said Prof. Ranjana Pathania, the lead researcher.

"By targeting persister cells, we may be able to and weaken the bacte-Preliminary findings improve treatment out- ria and inhibit bacterial comes for chronic and efflux pumps, potentially recurrent infections," she added.

The team found that tackling persistent infec- multiple mechanisms to additional research and resistance, said the team.

weaken persister cells. It "The ability of thymol disrupts bacterial energy to disrupt bacterial per- production, making sursistence and enhance the vival more difficult. Additionally, it damages the research will focus on protective outer membrane, increasing the bacteria's vulnerability.

Thymol also generates reactive oxygen species (ROS), which stress enhancing the effectiveness of meropenem.

clinical validation are required to assess thymol's potential in realworld therapeutic applications.

"Antimicrobial resistance is a critical global challenge. This study demonstrates how innovative approaches, including natural compounds, could contribute to overcoming persistent infections. It reflects our institute's commitment to research that addresses pressing healthcare challenges,' said Prof. K.K. Pant, Director, IIT Roorkee.

The next phase of refining the thymolmeropenem combination and evaluating its potential through further stud-

If validated through clinical trials, this approach could contribute to new strategies for combating antibiotic persistence, offering an While these findings additional tool in the fight a potential approach for thymol works through provide valuable insights, against antimicrobial



## GT, MI seek first win at Narendra Modi Stadium

AHMEDABAD, MAR 28 (UNI)

The Narendra Modi Stadium is set for another high-scoring thriller as Gujarat Titans (GT) take on Mumbai Indians (MI) in the ninth match of IPL 2025 here on Saturday.

The previous game at this venue saw a staggering 475 runs scored in 40 display. However, the bat- returning after serving an overs, underlining the ting-friendly conditions in over-rate penalty, will add batting-friendly nature of Ahmedabad could work in depth with both bat and the pitch. With both teams their favour. yet to open their account in the tournament, an has been a prolific scorer ously played for Gujarat, aggressive approach with at the Narendra Modi Stacould be a key factor. the bat will be key.

a turnaround after suffer- pressure situations. ing defeats in their open-

Jos Buttler (54 off 33). to bounce back after an should remain consistent

Mumbai, on the other ing up 3/30. hand, struggled on a slow



dium, amassing nearly Gujarat Titans have 1,000 runs in 19 matches. attack, spearheaded by dominated recent encoun- His form will be crucial ters against Mumbai Indiat the top. However, the Chahar, will aim for early ans, winning three of their team's lower middle order, breakthroughs. Left-arm last four meetings. How- including Shahrukh Khan, spinner Mitchell Santner ever, both teams enter Sai Kishore, and Arshad this match desperate for Khan, needs to step up in Puthur, who impressed

cern for GT, with Moham-trolling the middle overs. Gujarat fell short in med Siraj conceding 54

The star-studded bat-

ball. His experience on Captain Shubman Gill this surface, having previ-

Mumbai's bowling Trent Boult and Deepak and wrist-spinner Vignesh with a 3/32 spell against Bowling remains a con- CSK, will be crucial in con-

The Narendra Modi a high-scoring contest runs in four overs in the Stadium pitch is expected against Punjab Kings, last match. Kagiso Rabada to favour batsmen, with losing by 11 runs despite will be expected to lead little assistance for pacers. valiant efforts from Sai the pace attack, while Spinners might extract Sudharsan (74 off 41) and Rashid Khan will look some grip, but the surface Chasing 244, Gujarat's expensive outing. Left-arm throughout the game. lower middle order fal- spinner Sai Kishore was With 475 runs scored in tered, exposing a potential the standout performer in the last match here, anothweak link in their lineup. the previous game, pick- er high-scoring contest is

Chepauk surface against ting unit of Rohit Sharma, be warm and clear, with Boult, Deepak Chahar, Chennai Super Kings, Ryan Rickelton, Will Jacks, no rain forecast. The team Mujeeb Ur Rahman, Reece managing only 155/9. Tilak and Suryakumar Yadav batting first won the pre-Varma's 31 was the high- will be eager to exploit vious game comfortably, est score in an otherwise the favourable conditions. making the toss a crucial ana Raju, Ashwani Kumar, underwhelming batting Captain Hardik Pandya, factor. Opting to bat first Arjun Tendulkar.

could be the safer option. With both teams seeking their first win, the

match promises to be an exciting contest. While Gujarat Titans hold an edge with their strong top order, Mumbai Indians have the experience and firepower to mount a strong challenge. Execution with the bat will likely determine the winner.

Gujarat Titans: Shubman Gill (captain), Jos Buttler, Kumar Kushagra, Anuj Rawat, Sherfane Rutherford, Glenn Phillips, Nishant Sindhu, Mahipal Lomror, Washington Sundar, Mohammed Arshad Khan, Sai Kishore, Jayant Yadav, Karim Janat, Sai Sudharsan, Shahrukh Khan, Kagiso Rabada, Mohammed Siraj, Prasidh Krishna, Manav Suthar, Gerald Coetzee, Gurnoor Singh Brar, Ishant Sharma, Kulwant Khejroliya, Rahul Tewatia, Rashid Khan.

Mumbai Indians: Rohit Sharma, Suryakumar Yadav, Bevon Jacobs, Tilak Varma, Robin Minz, Ryan Rickelton, Shrijith Krishnan, Hardik Pandya (captain), Naman Dhir, Will Jacks, Mitchell Santner, Raj Angad Bawa, Vignesh Puthur, Corbin Bosch, Weather conditions will Jasprit Bumrah, Trent Topley, Lizaad Williams, Karn Sharma, Satyanaray-

### Nicholas Pooran reveals key behind his six-hitting exploits

HYDERABAD, MAR 28 (UNI)

Former West Indies whiteball captain Nicholas Pooran has revealed the key behind his six-hitting technique.

Pooran was the West Indies' leading run-scorer at last year's ICC Men's T20 World Cup with 228 runs and finished the tournament having hit more sixes (17) than any other player that featured at the event.

The 29-year-old showcased his batting exploits with another fine performance in the Indian Premier League (IPL) with the Lucknow Super Giants on Thursday as he smashed six maximums during a 26-ball 70 to help his side to an impressive five-wicket victory over Sunrisers Hyderabad.

It was the second consecutive occasion that Pooran has notched a halfcentury at this year's IPL and it helped the damaging left-hander collect the Purple Cap as the tournament's leading run-scorer.

He also has four more sixes than any other player at the IPL thus far and the former West Indies whiteball skipper believes keeping a clear mind at the as well," Pooran said. crease is helping him maintain the status as one of cricket, an ICC report said. the match-up is there

"I don't plan to hit sixes," Pooran said. "I just try my best to get

there, just time the ball nicely," he said.

"In the last nine years I Afghanistan in St Lucia have been working on my during the group stage of Pooran, who admitted he craft. Obviously, I have the event that helped the is lucky to have been born been getting the opportunity to bat feated at the tournament talent. higher up in the Powerplay

"It is really important to

cute your skills," he said.

in good positions and if it's last year's T20 World Cup ICC Men's T20I was an innings of 98 - from just 53 deliveries - against second consecutive year.

West Indies remain unde- with such considerable and qualify for the Super Eights.

While the West Indies cash in when the wicket is fell just short of qualifying the biggest hitters in world nice and obviously when for the knockout stages of the T20 World Cup, you try your best to exe- Pooran's efforts with the the years and I am getting Pooran's best effort at he won his way into the field and winning games

Team of the Year for the added.

It was just rewards for

"I've never worked on my bat speed, I'm just blessed with incredible talent," Pooran said.

"I am really happy that I have put in the work over bat didn't go unnoticed as the reward on the cricket for my team as well," he

## Djokovic into last four with great win over Korda in Miami Open

**AGENCIES** 

FLORIDA, MAR 28 (UNI)

Novak Djokovic overcame American Sebastian Korda in their rescheduled match to reach the semifinals of the Miami Open.

The world number five rallied in the second set from a break down to close out a 6-3 7-6 (7-4) victory.

The 37-year-old is the oldest player to reach the last four of an ATP Masters 1,000 event and is going for a seventh title in Miami.

be played on Wednesday so much," Djokovic told title. but was postponed to Sky Sports. Thursday at short notice not finish until after OK to get some sleep. off point, the BBC report- 2.30am so it disrupts your a host of top-10 seeds

"You wait an entire day happy to come through." and if it's for the rain I



Djokovic will face Bulguess you accept it, but garian 14th seed Grigor this was scheduled and Dimitrov in the semi-finals took the opening set on Italian 29th seed Matteo then the matches and on Friday as he continues Thursday, breaking his

The match was due to everything just extended his pursuit of a 100th ATP

It is a first semi-final "The match was post- appearance for Djokovic after Emma Raducanu's poned for today and it at this tournament since quarter-final match did wasn't too early so it was 2016 and, with Carlos Alcaraz, Jack Draper and 23:00, past the ATP's cut- I didn't go to bed until Daniil Medvedev among body rhythm - so I'm just already out, the draw has opened up for the Serb to

add another Miami title. Djokovic efficiently opponent's serve in the eighth game.

But the 24-time Grand Slam champion had to dig deep in the second, with some impressive serving allowing him to recover from 5-2 down to force a tie-break and clinch the

"Best serving performance for me so far," Djokovic said. "I was quite nervous because you never know what comes from Korda - he's so aggressive and talented."

"I was on my back foot, waiting for his error rather than dictating from the back of the court. When

I needed a first serve I got it but a tense match and great performance."

Earlier on Thursday, unseeded Czech Jakub Mensik beat 17th seed Arthur Fils 7-6 (7-5) 6-1 to book a semi-final against American Taylor Fritz, who secured a gruelling 7-5 6-7 (7-9) 7-5 win against

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### Karthik confident about Kohli's ability against spin

**AGENCIES** 

CHENNAI, MAR 28 (UNI)

key role here, where Virat around in recent times. Kohli's Royal Challengers on Chennai Super Kings (CSK) on Friday.

While over the last few years, opponents have ter. used spin to keep Kohli

"He has batted well in Bengaluru (RCB) will take the recent past against spin, especially in whiteball cricket," Karthik said ahead of the CSK encoun-

in check, RCB batting Kohli's recent successes coach and mentor Dinesh in big tournaments where Karthik believed the player spinners played a big role, Spin is expected to play a had managed to turn it including his 76 in the T20 World Cup 2024 Final and 218 runs in the Champions Trophy 2025.

While 17 overs of spin were bowled in the T20 Karthik reflected on Champions Trophy, where Karthik said.

the wickets were slow and helped the spinners.

"In the T20 World Cup finals, he got runs where it mattered. And apart from that, in the Champions Trophy, he had a good tournament second-highest run-getter [for India]. World Cup final; India And that doesn't come featured in Dubai in the without playing on spin,"