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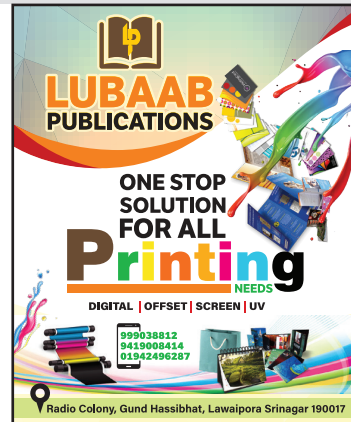
15TH
YEAR OF
PUBLICATION



HEADLINES

TODAY

Voice To The Voiceless



PM Modi Steering India Towards AI-Driven Innovation: LG Sinha

LG Attends Launch Ceremony of ATL Sarthi at University of Kashmir

■ HT News Desk

SRINAGAR, SEP 25: Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi is transforming India into a society driven by innovation, Lieutenant Governor Shri Manoj Sinha said earlier today. He said India is a global leader in Artificial Intelligence, AI-driven solutions for various sectors and expanding its reach to design and development. He was speaking at the launch of ATL Sarthi at University of Kashmir.

The University serves as a nodal institution for the ATL Sarthi initiative, collaborating with NITI Aayog to establish robust monitoring mechanisms and



strong institutional linkages with Atal Tinkering Labs (ATL) in schools across J&K. The initiative will focus on providing mentorship, capacity building for ATL teachers, and guiding students in transforming ideas into commercial prototypes.

In his address, the Lieutenant Governor lauded the ATL Sarthi initiative aimed at connecting every Atal Tinkering Lab to larger ecosystem of guidance and mentorship.

"The Atal Tinkering Lab is a fitting tribute to former Prime Minister Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee. These Labs are empowering our young students

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LG Addresses AIFORERA Council Meet in Srinagar

■ HT News Desk

SRINAGAR, SEP 25: "Rs. 1 lakh crore Urban Challenge Fund will be a game changer in the transformation of our cities and developing them as growth hubs," the Lieutenant Governor Shri Manoj Sinha said earlier today.

He said the initiative involving states/UTs and private players to redevelop 300 cities across India will promote innovation, robust infrastructure, improve ease of living and integrate sustainability into urban planning.

The Lieutenant Governor was speaking at the Governing Council Meeting of All India Forum of Real Estate Regulatory Authorities (AIFORERA) in Srinagar.

The Lieutenant Governor urged that the 'Whole of the Government' approach is needed for advancing this sector and ensuring accountability in timely project delivery.

"The transparency, accountability, and efficiency brought by RERA Act 2016 must protect homebuyers' interests and swift

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CM Announces 5-Marla Land for Flood-Hit Homeless



■ HT News Desk

BILLAWAR (KATHUA), SEP 25: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah today announced that the government has decided to provide five marlas of land each to all flood-affected families who have been rendered homeless and have suffered both on account of their houses destroyed and left without land due to landslides and flash-floods which has taken away their everything so that they are able to construct their dwelling units on the allotted land.

The Chief Minister made this announcement while interacting with residents of Duggain, Billawar,

whose houses and livelihoods were severely impacted by the recent flooding. Earlier, he conducted an aerial survey of the flood-affected areas in the district, accompanied by MLA Bani, Dr. Rameshwar Singh.

Assuring people of all possible assistance, Omar Abdullah directed the administration to ensure timely relief and rehabilitation measures. "The year 2025 has brought immense devastation to Jammu and Kashmir—from the dry spell in March-April to incessant rains, flash floods, and landslides in August-September," he said. "From Kathua to Kupwara, the damage has been unprecedented."

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CM Omar Reassures Flood-Hit Families in Mahore

■ HT News Desk

MAHORE (REASI), SEP 25: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah today undertook an aerial survey of the flood-affected areas of district Reasi before reaching Mahore to meet the people reeling under the devastation. Accompanied by MLA

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CS Reviews Budget, Emphasizes CapEx & Revenue

■ HT News Desk

SRINAGAR, SEP 25: Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo, today chaired a high-level meeting to review the performance of departments with regard to utilization of the annual budget and revenue realization in J&K.

The meeting was attended by Principal Secretary, Finance Department, Santosh D. Vaidya; Administrative Secretaries of all departments; Director General, Resources; Director General, Accounts & Treasuries; Director General, Budget, besides other senior officers.

During the review, the Chief Secretary took a detailed appraisal of the proportion of revenue and capital expenditure made by each

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CS Directs GST Rate Cuts for Consumer Benefit

■ HT News Desk

SRINAGAR, SEP 25: Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo, today chaired a high-level meeting with concerned Administrative Secretaries to review the implementation of recent Goods and Services Tax (GST) reforms and ensure that the benefits of reduced tax rates directly reach consumers on the ground.

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'Direct Vande Bharat Train from Jammu to Srinagar soon'

■ HT News Network

JAMMU, SEP 25: The Railways Department has announced that the Vande Bharat train, which is currently operating between Katra and Srinagar, will soon be extended to commence its journey from Jammu. Preparations are in full swing to facilitate the expansion of the semi-high-speed service, Divisional

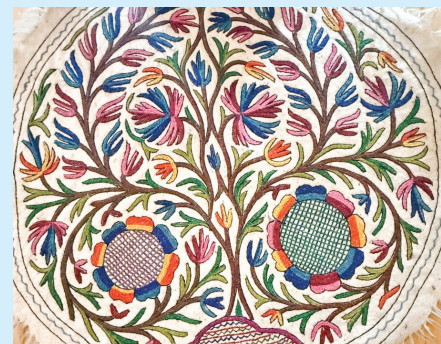
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Govt seeks local support to revive Namda Craft

GI Tag and Flagship Schemes Aim to Revive Tradition, facilitate Artisans

■ HT News Desk

SRINAGAR, SEP 25: In response to a news article published in a local Urdu daily on September 24, a spokesperson of the Directorate of Handicrafts & Handloom,



Kashmir, has reiterated that the Government is undertaking a series of concerted

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J&K to be torchbearer of India: Dr Jitendra

■ HT News Network

SRINAGAR, SEPT 25: Union Minister Dr Jitendra Singh on Thursday said Jammu and Kashmir has the potential to become a key driver of India's innovation-led growth as the country moves towards "Destination 2047."

Speaking at the launch of the ATL Sarthi



and Frontier Region Programme of Atal Innovation Mission at Kashmir University, Singh announced the setting up of 500 new Atal Tinkering Labs in J&K with an investment of ₹100 crore — the largest share among frontier regions.

He highlighted that J&K, with its vast

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Kashmir Apple Growers Report Prices Halved from Last Year

'Backlog, rising costs, market saturation threaten valley's horticulture sector'

■ HT News Desk / KNO

SRINAGAR, SEP 25: Demand for Kashmiri apples has plummeted drastically this season, with rates dipping to less than half of what growers earned last year, leaving thousands of orchardists across the valley in distress.

Speaking to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), Bashir Ahmad Basheer, president of the Kashmir Valley Fruit Growers Cum Dealers Union, said the industry is facing one of its toughest phases in recent history.

"Rates are very low this year — less than even 50 per cent of what we earned last season," Basheer said. "The primary reason is the backlog of produce that remained stranded on highways, mandis, orchards, and other storage facilities. This backlog will take nearly a month to clear, and only after that, we may see some improvement. But by then, more apples will have already reached the market, adding to the crisis."

Growers from different districts expressed deep concern over the unprecedented slump. They said that an apple

box, which fetched over Rs 1,000 last year, is being sold for barely Rs 400 this season.

"How can we survive when the cost of production itself is higher than the selling price?" asked Abdul Rashid, a grower from Shopian. "Fertilisers, pesticides, insecticides, freight, labour, boxes, paper, and packaging — everything has become costlier. But when we take our produce to the mandis, we are forced to sell it at throw-away prices."

Another grower, Ghulam Nabi from Sopore, said the situation has shaken

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GST Reforms Will Continue, Tax Burden To Ease Further As Economy Gains More Strength: PM Modi

■ HT News Network

GREATER NOIDA, SEP 25: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday said the reforms in GST will continue and the tax burden on citizens will further ease as the economy gains more strength.

Modi emphasised that the nation currently possesses strong willpower for reforms, backed by democratic and political stability, along with policy predictability.

Earlier this month, India effected next-generation reforms in GST.

Modi said the structural reforms



in Goods and Services Tax (GST) are set to give new wings to country's

growth story.

Addressing the gathering after inaugurating the Uttar Pradesh International Trade Show 2025 here, Modi said his government has significantly reduced taxes, curbed inflation, and increased both income and savings for the people.

He said that by making income up to Rs 12 lakh tax-free and implementing new GST reforms, citizens are set to save Rs 2.5 lakh crore this year alone.

The Prime Minister said the government introduced reforms in the

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Police Swiftly Arrest Accused in Minor Sexual Assault Case in Beerwah

■ HT News Desk

BEERWAH, SEP 26: Budgam Police has taken prompt action in a heinous case of sexual assault on children, ensuring that the habitual offender is brought to justice.

It was reported that three minor children (names withheld) were subjected to repeated sexual assault by a criminal. Acting without delay, Police Station Beerwah registered FIR No. 134/2025 under sections 65(2) & 352(2) of BNS read with sections 5/6 of the POCSO Act.

The accused was arrested within hours of the report. The crime scene was immediately preserved and examined by the FSL

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Javed Rana calls on Union Jal Shakti Minister C.R. Patil

Seeks Union Govt's assistance in Post-flood restoration, continuous support for Jal Jeevan Mission implementation in J&K

■ HT News Desk / DIPR

NEW DELHI, SEP 25: Jal Shakti Minister, Javed Ahmed Rana, today called on Union Minister for Jal Shakti, Chandrakant Raghunath Patil, in New Delhi to apprise him of critical issues currently confronting Jammu and Kashmir.

Javed Rana informed the Union Minister about the extensive damage to water supply and irrigation infrastructure caused by recent flash floods in the J&K and the urgent need for sustained financial support to complete ongoing schemes under the Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM).

During the meeting, Javed Rana conveyed the gravity of the situation following the unprecedented flash floods that hit various parts of Jammu & Kashmir during August and September 2025. He informed the Minister that the floods severely disrupted public life, damaged essential infrastruc-

ture, and caused large-scale destruction to the water supply, irrigation and flood protection systems.

The Minister highlighted that the damage has deeply impacted access to safe drinking water and irrigation across both Jammu and Kashmir divisions, creating immediate challenges for public health, agriculture and the overall well-being of rural communities.

The Jal Shakti Minister informed the Union Minister that the J&K Jal Shakti Department has taken swift emergency measures to restore basic services in the affected areas.

Javed Rana requested a special financial package from the Ministry of Jal Shakti to support full-scale restoration and to invest in long-term resilience-building measures. He emphasized that such support is not only critical for restoring normalcy but also for building infrastructure



that can better withstand the growing impacts of climate

change and extreme weather events in the region.

In addition to the flood-related concerns, the Minister

also raised the issue of the critical funding gap under the Jal Jeevan Mission, which aims to provide safe drinking water to every rural household in Jammu & Kashmir. He informed that while a large number of schemes have made substantial progress, including many nearing completion, the shortfall in Central assistance and delay in fund releases have posed serious constraints on meeting the ambitious timeline of full saturation by March 2025.

The Minister pointed out that despite the J&K's consistent progress and efficient implementation of JJM schemes, including the successful completion of a significant number of projects.

Rana underscored the need for immediate release of additional funds to meet outstanding payments and to maintain the pace of execution.

He urged the Union Minister to personally intervene and facilitate the timely release of

central funds and sanction of additional financial support, so that the JJM implementation in J&K does not suffer avoidable delays.

Expressing his appreciation for the support received, Javed Rana thanked C.R. Patil for his patient hearing, assurances and positive response to the issues raised.

He reiterated the Jammu & Kashmir Government's firm commitment, under the leadership of Chief Minister, Omar Abdullah, to the goal of "Har Ghar Jal" and to building robust, climate-resilient water infrastructure that ensures the right to safe drinking water for every citizen.

The Union Minister assured Javed Rana of full cooperation from the Government of India and acknowledged the need for urgent and sustained intervention to support the people of Jammu & Kashmir in this time of crisis.

KVIC kick starts Mission SEVA PARV across Kashmir

■ HT News Desk / DIPR

SRINAGAR, SEP 25: The State Office of Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC) has initiated a special drive under Seva Parv with focused approach to support SC/ST beneficiaries under the Prime Minister's Employment Generation Programme (PMEGP).

As part of this initiative, a Bankers meeting was convened at Conference Hall, Sanat Ghar, Bemina here today chaired by Khalid Majeed, Director, Industries & Commerce, Kashmir.

Rajesh Kumar, State Director, KVIC; Anil Kumar Sharma, Nodal Officer, PMEGP; representative from UTLC, officers from leading banks, DIC, KVIB, Lead District Managers (LDMS), representative from department of Posts, and other stakeholders were also present.

The meeting started with swadeshi pledge of Khadi Mahotsav.

During the meeting, Nodal Officer (PMEGP) gave a detailed presentation (PPT) for all stakeholders, highlighting the overall performance of PMEGP in Jammu & Kashmir, progress made in sanctioning and disbursing cases of SC/ST beneficiaries and objectives and modalities of the ongoing special drive under Seva Parve.

He also emphasized on clearing all pending cases of SC/ST beneficiaries at the earliest, reviewing rectification cases concerning SC/ST applicants, ensuring that beneficiaries belonging to minority communities, women, Persons with Disabilities (PWD), and ex-servicemen who also fall under the SC/ST category, furnish their valid SC/ST certificates under PMEGP, adding that this step will enable faster subsidy release.

He also called Banks & Implementing Agencies that all pending and rectification cases of SC/ST beneficiaries be cleared before 2nd October 2025.

Speaking on the occasion, Director, Industries and Commerce instructed banks to rectify all the SC/ST cases and co-operate with enumerator of Department of post in physical verification.

The State Director, KVIC Jammu, reiterated that this drive is part of the Commission's commitment to ensure inclusive growth and priority support to SC/ST communities under PMEGP.

40+ startup ideas pitched at JKEDI Boot Camps held across J&K under J&K Startup Policy 2024-27

■ HT News Desk / DIPR

JAMMU/SRINAGAR, SEP 25:

In a major push to nurture grass-roots innovation and entrepreneurship, Jammu and Kashmir Entrepreneurship Development Institute (JKEDI) organized series of Startup Idea Challenge Boot Camps across SKUAST (K) campuses, Government Polytechnic College Reasi, and Government Boys Higher Secondary School Budgam.

More than 250 students and aspiring entrepreneurs participated enthusiastically, pitching over 40 innovative startup ideas under the recently launched J&K Startup Policy 2024-27.

At SKUAST-KWadura Campus,

the boot camp was inaugurated by Dr. Shakeel A Mir, Dean, Faculty of Agriculture, who urged students to think creatively and embrace entrepreneurship. Professors Imtiyaz, Bilal Ahmad, and Zahoor A Baba, along with Naveed, CEO & Head of SKIIE Centre, were also present.

JKEDI officers guided students on pitching techniques, and over 120 participants took part in interactive sessions to refine their ideas.

Similar boot camps were held at Shuhama and Rangil Campuses of SKUAST-K, where students engaged in ideation exercises and presented pitches before a jury comprising faculty and JKEDI officials. Sheikh Nowsheen, Assistant

Faculty, JKEDI Ganderbal, delivered an insightful session on entrepreneurship and innovation, motivating youth to pursue startups as viable careers.

At Government Polytechnic College Reasi, the event was inaugurated by Principal Er. Arun Bangotra, who called on students to focus on sustainable ventures.

The session was led by JKEDI District Nodal Officer (DNO) Reasi, Abhilash Kumar Braroo, and Assistant Manager, Sorab Mengi. Eight students pitched their startup ideas, out of which four were shortlisted for the next round of the J&K Startup Idea Challenge. The boot camp witnessed participation of 85

enthusiastic students.

The Budgam Boot Camp, held at Government Boys Higher Secondary School, saw 13 participants pitching their business ideas before a distinguished jury comprising JKEDI officials, Director RSETI, and faculty members.

Syed Nazneen, District Nodal Officer, JKEDI Budgam, presented the provisions of the Startup Policy and trained students on pitching. The highlight of the event was a motivational address by noted comedian and TV artist Nazir Josh, who urged youth to adopt self-reliance and innovation as guiding principles.

Meanwhile, an orientation programme under the J&K Start-

up Idea Challenge was also organized at Amar Singh College Srinagar for Commerce and Computer Science students, where experts highlighted opportunities available under the Startup Policy 2024-27.

These boot camps served as vibrant platforms for idea exchange, mentoring, and entrepreneurial learning. Faculty members, jury experts, and dignitaries across districts praised JKEDI's sustained efforts to strengthen the startup ecosystem in Jammu and Kashmir. By providing hands-on training, exposure, and policy support, JKEDI continues its mission to transform youth into job creators rather than job seekers.

MC Poonch spearheads "Ek Ghanta, Ek Sath Shramdaan"; hosts Angikaar programme

■ HT News Desk / DIPR

POONCH, SEP 25: Municipal Council Poonch today organized a cleanliness themed "Ek Ghanta, Ek Sath" Shramdaan as part of the ongoing Sewa Parv. The initiative, led by EO Municipal Council Khalil A. Bandy, focused on cleaning the historic Qila area, particularly the library premises, to promote the message of collective responsibility towards cleanliness.

The drive witnessed enthusiastic participation from sanitation workers, staff of the Municipal Council, members of civil society, representatives of the Bar Association and officials from the Departments of Social Welfare and Education. Together, they dedicated an hour of voluntary service, demonstrating the power of commu-

nity effort in creating a cleaner and healthier environment.

The EO emphasized that cleanliness is not only a civic duty but also a shared commitment to public health, dignity and the preservation of heritage spaces. He further highlighted that the initiatives like these echo the vision of a Swachh Bharat, reinforcing the belief that sustainable change begins with individual and collective action.

Meanwhile, the Municipal Council organised the Angikaar programme under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana-Urban (PMAY-U), generating awareness among the general public about the Housing scheme and other welfare initiatives. Different departments installed stalls to inform and educate people about their respective

schemes and services.

MLA Haveli, Ajaz Ahmed Jan graced the occasion as the Chief Guest. Among the other distinguished attendees were Former Chairmen, MC Poonch, Sunil Sharma and Advocate Rajinder Singh Kaka, Former Vice Chairman Adv Humera Saleem and several former councillors who extended their support to the programme.

A highlight of the event was the symbolic handover of keys to two beneficiaries, whose houses under PMAY-U were complete, marking their Greh Pravesh and fulfilling the dream of owning a pucca house. The programme was attended by PMAY-U beneficiaries, street vendors and sanitation workers, reflecting the inclusive approach of the initiative.

Sewa Parv: DC leads swachhata cleanliness drive at Doda

■ HT News Desk / DIPR

DODA, SEP 25: A massive Swachhata cleanliness drive themed "Ek Din -Ek Ghanta-Ek Saath," was organized today by the Municipal Council Doda as part of the ongoing Sewa Parv campaign.

The drive, led by Deputy Commissioner Harvinder Singh, attracted active participation from district officers, government officials, NGOs, civil society members and the general public.



The drive commenced from the main gate of the DC Office Complex, covered various areas of downtown and culminated back at the DC Office Complex. On the occasion, the DC gave away disaster relief kits to Municipal Workers, acknowledging their tireless service in maintaining cleanliness and sanitation across the town.

The participants carried banners of Swachhata initiatives and wore masks, symbolizing their commitment to both cleanliness and public health.

Addressing the gathering, the Deputy Commissioner said that the initiative forms an integral part of the Sewa Parv, which is a movement dedicated to public service with passion and commitment.

Other Government functionaries present were Additional Deputy Commissioner Anil Kumar Thakur; Assistant Commissioner Revenue Ashraf Pervez; Assistant Commissioner Development Din Mohammad Afazi district heads of different departments, municipal functionaries, and officials. The active participation of NGOs, civil society members and local residents reflected the spirit of collective responsibility towards a cleaner and healthier environment.

The initiative was conducted under the guidance of Deputy Commissioner Doda Harvinder Singh and supervision of Executive Officer Municipal Council Doda, Yasir Wani.

Agriculture department gears up for paddy procurement operations KMS 2025-26

Director reviews preparedness

■ HT News Desk / DIPR

JAMMU, SEP 25: A meeting to review preparedness for the Paddy Procurement Season, KMS 2025-26 was convened today under the chairmanship of Director Agriculture Jammu, Anil Gupta here in the Conference Hall Directorate of Agriculture, Krishi Bhawan Talab Tillo. The meeting was attended by senior functionaries of the Agriculture Department and the Food Corporation of India (FCI).

The Director Agriculture reviewed in detail the arrangements for the crucial operations to ensure smooth, transparent and farmer friendly functioning of procurement centres. It was informed that FCI will procure paddy directly from farmers through the Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) system, thereby ensuring directed payments into farmers' accounts within two working days at the notified Minimum Support Price (MSP) of Rs2,389 per quintal for



Grade A and Rs 2,369 per quintal for Common Grade paddy. An Aadhaar based biometric authentication system will be implemented at all procurement centres to eliminate intermediaries and ensure transparency.

The Director directed the Chief Agriculture Officers of Jammu, Kathua and Samba to appoint SMS-level officers for effective supervision at procurement mandis and

to conduct joint inspections of mandi sites with FCI. He further instructed that districts must ensure speedy processing of bills so that farmers receive timely payments.

It was informed that the specifications for KMS 2025-26 will remain unchanged and any necessary updates will be notified by FCI through its portal. Participants discussed the provision of uniform

cleaning charges, timely supply of gunny bags and logistical support at procurement mandies, coordinated between FCI and the Agriculture Department. The proposal to establish additional procurement centres at Airwan (District Kathua) and Ramgarh (District Samba) is under consideration, pending approval from FCI based on demand and feasibility.

The FCI representatives apprised that tenders for 24 procurement mandis have been issued and are under evaluation. The appointment of Mandi Labour Contractors (MLC) will follow shortly. At present, 24 Paddy Procurement Centres are operational across Jammu, Kathua and Samba districts to facilitate procurement operations.

The meeting was attended by Joint Director (SLUB/Farms) Jammu Sohan Singh, Deputy Director Agriculture (Central) Sanjeev Rai Gupta, Manager (General) FCI Mukesh Verma, Manager (General) FCI Vikash Kumar, DM FCI Jammu Sant Navneet Kumar Rana, DAO (Extension) Kathua Ravi Sharma and I/c Procurement Cell (DAJ) Sanjeev Khajuria, among others. Chief Agriculture Officer Jammu Manohar Lal Sharma, Regional Level SMS Madan Lal and DAO (Extension) Samba Harvinder Singh joined the meeting through Video Conference (VC).



Sakeena Itoo reviews performance, functioning of JKBOSE

■ HT News Desk / DIPR

SRINAGAR, SEP 25: Minister for Education, Social Welfare Health and Medical Education, Sakeena Itoo today chaired a meeting at Civil Secretariat here to review the performance and functioning of Jammu and Kashmir Board of School Education (JKBOSE).

The meeting was attended by Chairman JKBOSE and Additional Chief Secretary Higher Education, Shantamanu; Secretary School Education, Ram Niwas Sharma; Director School Education Kashmir, Dr. G.N Itoo; Director School Education Jammu, Naseem Javid Chowdhary; Secretary JKBOSE, Ghulam Hassan Sheikh and other senior officers of JKBOSE and School Education department.

During the meeting, the Education Minister took comprehensive assessment of overall performance, examination mechanism, evaluation, curriculum development, digitisation services as well as ongoing reforms aimed at strengthening school education



across Jammu and Kashmir.

Addressing the officers during the meeting, the Education Minister emphasized on timely conduct of examinations and strengthening of grievance redressal mechanisms for the facilitation of students. She further asked the officers that any updation related to curriculum updation should be done timely and before the onset

of new academic session.

The Minister also directed the JKBOSE authorities that the textbooks should be made available by the end of November so that there is no hindrance in supply position before the start of new session. She asked the JKBOSE authorities and School Education department to devise a proper mechanism for dispatching of

textbooks to schools well in time.

The Minister appreciated the JKBOSE for some student centric initiatives which will make the registration process as well as examination mechanism smooth. She asked the officers to establish proper mechanism for evaluation so that the results can be declared timely.

Highlighting the importance

of accountability and efficiency, the Minister underscored the need for continuous upgradation of infrastructure, capacity-building of staff, and closer coordination with schools to address challenges on the ground related to examinations.

"Education is the foundation of our future. The role of JKBOSE is pivotal in shaping a transparent, modern, student-friendly examination and evaluation system. Our priority is to strengthen institutions so that every child in Jammu and Kashmir can benefit from quality education", Sakeena Itoo stated.

The Education Minister further called the JKBOSE authorities to issue date sheet for 10th and 12th classes well in time so that the students can prepare accordingly for their respective examinations.

During the meeting, Secretary JKBOSE gave a detailed presentation on the action plan for forthcoming examinations as well as other aspects of the Board.

Govt Polytechnic Reasi, JKEDI host Bootcamp to promote startup ecosystem

■ HT News Desk / DIPR

REASI, SEP 25: Government Polytechnic Reasi in collaboration with the Jammu and Kashmir Entrepreneurship Development Institute (JKEDI) on Thursday organised a Boot camp under the Start-up India Challenge.



The Bootcamp proved to be an enriching experience, giving young minds a platform to showcase their innovative ideas and understand the entrepreneurial ecosystem. The event witnessed enthusiastic participation from students, who came forward with innovative start-up ideas. Several innovative ideas were pitched by participants, which were evaluated by a panel of experts for shortlisting to the next round of the Startup Idea Challenge.

The ideas presented by Reetika, 5th Semester Computer Engineering student; Abhishek Thakur, 5th Semester Mechanical Engineering student, Mohd. Younis, Computer Engineering student, Arti Sharma, Computer Engineering student, Vikram Singh, Computer Engineering student, Kapil Sharma and Israr Ahmed, Computer Engineering student, were shortlisted by the panel of experts. The event concluded with a formal vote of thanks by Ajay Dogra, Incharge Training and Placement cell of college to the JKEDI for their support in making the program a success. Others present on the occasion were staff of the college including Himanshu Bakshi, Sunil Kumar, Parshotam Lal and a large gathering of students of the college.

Earlier, the event began with a welcome address by the Principal Er. Arun Bangotra, who motivated the students by sharing inspiring examples of successful start-ups such as Zomato, Paytm, OYO etc. He encouraged them to think creatively and pursue entrepreneurship with confidence.

Sorab Mengi (Assistant Manager), JKEDI and Abilash Kumar Braroo, District Nodal Officer, JKEDI also shared insights into the various programs and policies undertaken by JKEDI to strengthen the startup ecosystem in Jammu and Kashmir.

CME on Dementia held at GMC Srinagar to mark World Alzheimer's Day

■ HT News Desk / DIPR

SRINAGAR, SEP 25: Department of Neurology, Government Medical College (GMC), Srinagar, Thursday organised a Continuing Medical Education (CME) on Dementia in the GMC Auditorium, to commemorate World Alzheimer's Day.

The program was attended by a large gathering of doctors, neurologists, postgraduate students, neuroscience students and caregivers of dementia patients from across the valley.

This year's CME was centered on the theme 'Ask about Dementia', with particular focus on identifying and Treating Reversible Dementias, underlining the importance of early detection, timely interventions, and holistic strategies.

Principal GMC, Dr Iffat Hasan inaugurated the CME, with Prof Parvaiz A Shah, Ex. Principal GMC Srinagar and Director Health Services, Dr Jehangir Bakhshi as guest of honors, and attended by Administrator GMC and Associated Hospitals, M Ashraf Hakak and Medical Superintendent Dr Rubena.

A poster competition was also organized as part of the event, with enthusiastic participation from young doctors and trainees, who were felicitated for their innovative presentations.

A unique feature of the program was the special session for caregivers of dementia patients, who were invited to interact directly with leading neurologists of the valley. This session provided a valuable platform for caregivers to share their experiences, seek guidance, and understand practical approaches to managing the challenges of dementia care.

The heart of the CME was an engaging panel discussion, where experts deliberated on both the medical and social aspects of dementia, topics such as accurate diagnosis, caregiver burden, social stigma, and community support was thoroughly discussed with emphasis laid on multidisciplinary solutions.

Speaking on the occasion, Prof. Dr Iffat deliberated upon the theme of the CME and on this year's topic 'Ask about Dementia', its relevance and all related aspects. She said that Dementia is a major public health issue that requires a multidisciplinary approach for management. Early detection and awareness are crucial in improving the quality of life for patients and their caregivers, she added.

District Kishtwar observes Day 9 with focus on health, cleanliness & community Empowerment

■ HT News Desk / DIPR

KISHTWAR, SEP 25: The Day 09 of Sewa Parv 2025 witnessed a vibrant display of civic responsibility, environmental consciousness and community engagement activities across Kishtwar district.

A major highlight of the day was a Mega Painting Competition organised at the historic Chowgan Ground, jointly by the Chief Education Office, Municipal Council and the Indira Gandhi National Centre for Arts.

The event saw enthusiastic participation from students, who creatively expressed themes related to cleanliness, environmental conservation and social harmony.

Adding to the momentum, the Municipal Council Kishtwar led a Plog Run followed by a spirited Swachhta Rally in collaboration with the Government Boys Higher Second-

ary School.

The initiative aimed to amplify the message of sanitation, waste management, and the collective duty of citizens towards a cleaner society.

In alignment with the broader objectives of Sewa Parv 2025, several impactful initiatives were undertaken across District Kishtwar.

The Municipal Council conducted intensive door-to-door awareness drives focusing on waste segregation, promotion of the Swachhata App and encouraging the reduction of single-use plastics. These efforts were coupled with the promotion of the PM SVANidhi Scheme, aiming to empower local street vendors through access to micro-credit and digital inclusion.

A First Aid Training Workshop was organized at Government Higher Secondary School, Nag-

seni, where students received practical, hands-on training in CPR and other life-saving techniques. The session was facilitated by teachers and health professionals, highlighting the importance of first-response skills in emergency situations.

The Health Department organised a series of health camps and awareness programs on menstrual hygiene under the 'Swasth Nari, Sashakt Parivar Abhiyaan', with a special focus on women's health and overall family well-being. These initiatives aimed to promote preventive healthcare and break the stigma surrounding menstrual health.

The ICDS Department also organized counseling sessions on optimal Infant and Young Child Feeding (IYCF) practices, with a strong focus on complementary feeding in all Anganwadi Centres (AWCs) across the district.

DLIC Approves 171 Cases under Mission YUVA in Ramban

■ HT News Desk / DIPR

RAMBAN, SEP 25: Deputy Commissioner Ramban, Mohammad Alyas Khan, today chaired a meeting of the District Level Implementation Committee (DLIC) under the ambitious Mission YUVA initiative. The meeting was convened to evaluate applications and extend financial support to local youth for establishing viable business ventures, thereby giving a major push to self-employment and economic empowerment in the district.

During the meeting, the committee undertook a detailed block-wise review of applications received under Mission YUVA, scrutinizing

them for eligibility, financial viability, and sustainability of proposed projects. A roadmap was also drawn to ensure that the scheme empowers the district's youth with long-term livelihood opportunities and contributes to overall economic growth.

The meeting was attended by GM DIC Ramban Ravinder Anand, Assistant Labour Commissioner Amit Kumar, Lead District Manager Ramban, and other concerned officers, who shared inputs on improving the outreach and impact of the programme.

As many as 171 applications verified by the Small Business Development Unit (SBDU) Ramban were placed before the committee.

After a comprehensive evaluation based on eligibility norms, project feasibility, and socio-economic background of applicants, all 171 cases were approved for financial assistance and mentorship support under Mission YUVA.

Speaking on the occasion, the Deputy Commissioner termed Mission YUVA a "ray of hope for the youth" and stressed that the Government's priority is to nurture entrepreneurship, reduce dependency on government jobs, and encourage innovation-driven enterprises. He highlighted that financial assistance under the Mission is not limited to credit support alone but is also complemented by mentorship, capacity-

building, and market linkages.

The Deputy Commissioner also directed the District Nodal Officer JKEDI and the General Manager DIC to fast-track preparation and verification of Detailed Project Reports (DPRs) to ensure that pending applications are processed without delay and genuine aspirants receive timely assistance.

On the occasion, Assistant Labour Commissioner Amit Kumar informed that so far, 1078 cases have been approved under Mission YUVA in Ramban district, benefiting hundreds of families and motivating more young people to come forward with their ideas.

The DC further called upon PRIs, line departments, and youth

clubs to mobilize greater awareness at the grassroots level so that no eligible youth is left behind. He added that Mission YUVA is not just about creating jobs but about building a self-reliant, skilled, and confident generation ready to contribute to the region's progress.

The initiative has generated widespread enthusiasm among the youth of Ramban, many of whom aspire to venture into small-scale industries, services, and innovative start-ups. The administration hopes that with continued handholding, these ventures will transform Ramban into a hub of entrepreneurship and inclusive development.

84 Bn CRPF Conducts Swachhata Hi Seva 2025 Campaign at GHS Chanderkote

■ HT News Desk / DIPR

RAMBAN, SEP 25: Under the aegis of the nationwide Swachhata Hi Seva 2025 campaign, the 84 Battalion CRPF today organized a mass cleanliness drive at Government High School Chanderkote in Ramban district, J&K. The event was led by Second-in-Command A.K. Dixit and Second-in-Command Vikram Singh, with active participation from more than 50 Officers, Subordinate Officers and Other Ranks of the Battalion.

Held under the theme "Ek Din, Ek Ghanta, Ek Saath," the drive focused on cleaning the school premises by cutting grass, clearing garbage, removing polybags, and ensuring a cleaner environment

for students. More than 160 participants – including CRPF personnel, school children, staff, and local civilians – enthusiastically joined hands to promote the message of cleanliness and civic responsibility.

During an interaction with the participants, the senior officers highlighted that cleanliness is not a one-day event but a continuous habit that needs to be inculcated in society. They urged citizens to contribute through Shramdaan activities and emphasized that a Jan Andolan (people's movement) was essential to achieve the dream of a clean and green India.

Headmaster Abdur Rehman, along with teachers and students, expressed gratitude to the CRPF for selecting their



school for this noble initiative. He noted that the involvement of students in such campaigns would help instill in them a lifelong sense of responsibility towards hygiene, environment, and community service.

The campaign not only addressed environmental hygiene but also sought to spread awareness among children about plastic waste management, proper disposal of garbage, and the significance of maintaining personal as well as public cleanliness. The CRPF personnel also interacted with students, encouraging them to adopt eco-friendly practices such as avoiding single-use plastic, planting more trees, and keeping their surroundings litter-free.

It is pertinent to mention that the 84 Bn CRPF has been

deployed in J&K since 2010, with its Battalion Headquarters at Chatha, Jammu. Its companies are stationed across Ramban district, performing operationally sensitive Road Opening Party (ROP) duties on NH-44, ensuring the smooth and secure movement of security force convoys and civilian traffic through the region.

By taking up this initiative alongside its operational responsibilities, the Battalion has once again demonstrated its dual role of ensuring national security and contributing to community welfare. The campaign concluded with a pledge by all participants to maintain cleanliness and carry forward the message of Swachhata Hi Seva in their homes and neighborhoods.

HT EDITORIAL

Carry out dredging of water bodies, flood channels at the earliest

Over the past 15 years or so the union territory of Jammu & Kashmir has been hit by many disasters with people losing their lives and properties getting damaged. In such a scenario it was important that all necessary precautions should have been taken by the government so that future disasters could have been averted. However, on ground the situation is grim with disaster preparedness missing.

The lack of preparation from the people at helm in mitigating the disasters became evident after the recent floods in both the Kashmir and Jammu divisions of the union territory. Even though the government claimed that there is nothing to worry about, at the end of the day the people were at the receiving end. Lakhs of people suffered on account of floods and thousands of families had to shift from their native areas following the floods.

Referring to the floods of Kashmir valley chief minister Omar Abdullah said that the matters have been made worse since no dredging has taken place in the flood channels of the valley. Omar while talking to media persons during his visit to one of the affected areas said that since huge funds had been allocated for the dredging of flood channels a probe needs to be carried out as to where has the money gone.

While analyzing the statement of Omar one can say that he is right and investigations need to be carried out as far as allocation of funds for dredging purposes is concerned. Over the years virtually very little dredging has been carried out in the flood channels and as such there has been no change in the carrying capacity of these flood channels. As on date a rainfall of a few hours keeps the people of Kashmir valley on tenterhooks and the basic reason for the same is the less carrying capacity of flood channels.

Since the autumn season is about to start in the Kashmir valley it is important that the government takes up the dredging of flood channels and water bodies seriously and people heave a sigh of relief. It is important to carry out dredging of water bodies as the same would lead to increase in the carrying capacity of these natural resources. Once the water bodies are able to absorb more water then there are least chances of flood and areas getting inundated.

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Pulwama’s Touqeer Ashraf: A Young Voice for Kashmiri Online



■ Burhan Nazir

In a world where regional languages are often overshadowed by the dominance of English, Hindi, and Urdu, one young boy from South Kashmir’s Pulwama district has emerged as a digital torch-bearer for Kashmiri. Touqeer Ashraf, the founder of the Instagram page Keashur Praw (translated as Shimmering Light), is determined to keep the Kashmiri language not only alive but also appealing to a new generation that is rapidly losing touch with its roots.

A Digital Mission for Kashmiri

Scrolling through his Instagram handle, one comes across short yet captivating videos that showcase the essence of Kashmiri culture — from ancient shrines and heritage sites to local delicacies and traditional practices. But what makes these videos unique is Ashraf’s decision to narrate them in fluent Kashmiri, a language that, despite being the mother tongue of millions, often finds itself neglected in both official spaces and private conversations.

By merging the charm of Kashmiri storytelling with the reach of modern social media, Touqeer has built a platform where heritage meets innovation. His work resonates with a generation that consumes content online but rarely encounters their own mother tongue in these spaces.

“Silence in Our Mother Tongue Is Dangerous”

For Touqeer, this effort is more than just a hobby — it is a cultural responsibility. He believes the absence of Kashmiri from public and political life carries long-term consequences.

“When the political representatives of Kashmir, who are seen as the face of our land and culture,



choose to speak in languages other than Kashmiri in parliament or with the capital, Delhi, it silently pushes our mother tongue to the margins,” he explains.

“Language is not just a tool of communication but the foundation of identity and cultural continuity.”

This strong conviction underlines every video he uploads. Whether he is showcasing Pulwama’s scenic apple orchards or narrating the history of an old shrine, Touqeer is simultaneously preserving and popularizing a language that is at risk of being sidelined.

National Recognition

In 2023, Touqeer’s dedication earned him a cov-

eted spot in the India Book of Records, acknowledging his innovative use of social media to promote Kashmiri language and culture. For a young boy from Pulwama, this recognition was both a personal milestone and a moment of pride for his community.

The achievement has motivated him to push further, inspiring others to take pride in Kashmiri and to use creative ways of reviving interest in the language.

Inspiring the Youth

Touqeer’s journey reflects a broader cultural challenge. With increasing globalization, many Kashmiri households encourage children to prioritize English or Urdu for better educational and professional opportunities. While practical, this trend often sidelines Kashmiri, leaving it confined to rural areas or older generations.

By bringing Kashmiri into the vibrant, youthful world of Instagram and digital content, Touqeer is proving that the language can be modern, relevant, and even aspirational. His work demonstrates that tradition and technology do not have to be opposites — they can strengthen one another.

A Call for Responsibility

Touqeer also calls upon institutions, leaders, and influencers to recognize their responsibility in protecting the Kashmiri language. He argues that beyond individuals, systemic support is needed to ensure Kashmiri is taught, spoken, and celebrated at all levels of society.

“If we lose our mother tongue, we lose a part of ourselves,” he says, warning that neglect today could mean extinction tomorrow.

Carrying the Torch Forward

As “Keashur Praw” continues to gain followers and inspire conversations, Touqeer Ashraf stands as a reminder of what one passionate individual can achieve. His mission is not just about language preservation but about identity, pride, and belonging.

For the people of Kashmir, his story is more than a personal success — it is a shimmering light of hope that the Kashmiri language will find new life in the digital era.

Navratri, Prasad and Parenting: The Importance of Discernment in Faith



■ Dr. Priyanka Saurabh

Traditional offerings like halwa and puri are important during Navratri, but they are safe only for humans. Cows’ digestive systems differ from humans, so products made with ghee, sugar, and refined flour can be harmful. During this time, cows should only be fed green grass, straw, fruits, and fodder. Devotion and protection can coexist. The purpose of Navratri is not just devotion, but also prudent faith and animal protection. By maintaining balance, we can maintain both tradition and animal welfare.

Navratri is a highly significant festival in Indian culture and religious beliefs. It is not just a nine-day celebration, but also a symbol of devotion, restraint, health, and social responsibility. During Navratri, devotees worship Goddess Durga in their homes and temples, and pay special attention to food and eating habits. Halwa-puri, chana dal, fruits, and other traditional dishes hold special significance for devotees on this occasion. The deliciousness and sacred nature of these dishes make them a part of a religious ritual.

However, amidst this sacred tradition, an important question arises: Are these dishes prepared during Navratri safe only for human consumption, or can they also be given to our sacred friends, such as cows? This question is important not only from a religious perspective, but also from a health and ecological perspective.

The halwa-puri prasad (offering) during Navratri is primarily prepared from wheat flour, ghee, and sugar. Devotees delight in its flavor

and aroma, and consider it a symbol of devotion to the Goddess. Enjoying halwa-puri is not only a part of the celebration, but also strengthens family and social bonds. However, it is equally important to consider its health benefits.

Halwa-puri provides a limited amount of energy and satisfaction for humans. However, eating it in excessive amounts can cause digestive problems, weight gain, and other health risks. During Navratri, people often consume fruits, light sattvic foods, and milk to purify both the body and mind. Therefore, Halwa-puri should be consumed in moderation and with caution.

Now the question arises whether halwa-puri can be given to cows. Cows are considered extremely sacred in Hinduism. They are considered a mother, and religious texts emphasize the importance of serving and protecting them. However, cows’ digestive systems differ from humans. They primarily rely on green grass, fodder, straw, and grains. Heavy and sweet foods like ghee, sugar, and refined flour can be harmful to them. Excessive ghee and sugar in halwa-puri can adversely affect their health, causing diarrhea, indigestion, and other gastrointestinal problems.

The need for balance becomes clear here. The purpose of Navratri is not only faith and devotion, but also to maintain coexistence with animals and nature. Devotion and protection can coexist. Offering halwa and puri is not good for the health of cows, and the best option is to provide them with natural fodder, green grass, and fruits. From a religious perspective, the true meaning of devotion is to use discretion while still practicing our faith.

Traditionally, the distribution of prasad during Navratri should be limited to human consumption only. Doing so adheres to religious beliefs and ensures the safety of animals. Many temples and religious sites maintain this balance by offering only fruits, green leaves, and dry

grains as prasad. This provides nutrition to cows and protects their health.

This topic is extremely important from a cultural perspective. In Indian tradition, the cow is considered a mother. Religious texts and folk tales specifically mention their protection, respect, and service. If we ignore the health of cows during Navratri out of devotion and tradition, we fail to uphold the principles of their protection and care. This is a matter where a balance between religion and science is essential.

Education and awareness play a crucial role in this regard. Religious organizers, temples, and families need to understand that every offering they make must be safe not only for humans but also for animals, if any. Awareness campaigns should be conducted through schools, social organizations, and religious organizations to ensure that people understand that halwa-puri is not safe for cows.

Health experts also believe that keeping cows away from human food is essential for their long-term health. Ghee, sugar, and oil-based foods can cause problems in their gastrointestinal system. Therefore, traditional offerings during Navratri should be enjoyed only for humans. This maintains religious values and ensures the safety of the animals.

The significance of Halwa-Puri during Navratri is not limited to taste or tradition. It is also a medium of devotion, collective enthusiasm, and spending time with family. But we must remember that devotion does not simply mean following tradition; it must also include discretion and prudence. Prasad should be distributed while keeping in mind the health of cows and other domestic animals.

Studies and experiences show that neglecting animals during religious events not only impacts their health but also highlights a lack of awareness in society. Therefore, prioritizing both animal safety and human health during Navratri is

essential. This fulfills both our religious beliefs and social responsibility.

Through this tradition, we can also impart an important lesson to children. They can be taught that religious festivals are not just a means of celebration and joy, but also hold messages of wisdom, responsibility, and coexistence. When children learn that halwa-puri is only for humans and that cows are fed natural fodder, they become sensitive and responsible citizens in their own lives.

The message of Navratri is to embrace faith, restraint, and prudence. While enjoying traditional delicacies and offerings, we must remember that the safety and health of our four-legged friends is paramount. If we maintain this balance, the Navratri celebration becomes even more meaningful and enjoyable.

Finally, it must be remembered that the true purpose of Navratri is not merely to indulge in food and drink and festivities. This festival teaches us that faith and wisdom can coexist. It is our religious and social responsibility to take care of the health of both humans and animals. Therefore, during Navratri, halwa-puri should be consumed in moderation for humans, and cows should be given only natural fodder. This is the correct and balanced approach, which integrates faith, culture, and safety.

Through this balance and wisdom, the Navratri festival not only becomes religiously fulfilling but also serves as an inspiring example for our society and animal welfare. In this way, we can adhere to religious faith and cultural tradition while fulfilling our responsibility to our four-legged friends.

The author is a Research Scholar in Political Science, Poet, freelance journalist and columnist, Ubba Bhawan, Aryanagar, Hisar (Haryana)-127045

Assam Rifles:

Guardians of Peace and Humanity



■ By M S Nazki

Wisdom is an earned trench by trench, street by street, from one battle line to the next..... And God teaches forgiveness!And thus the game of life and martyrdom continues.....We salute you 33 Assam Rifles.....the rarest of the rarest and bravest of the brave!

Aaaa...aaaa, aye mere vatan ke logon, tum khoob laga lo naara, Ye shubh din hai ham sab ka lahara lo tiranga pyaara, par mat bhoolo seema par, veeron ne hai praan ganvaaye, kuch yaad unhein bhi kar lo, jo laut ke ghar na aaye.....Aaaa...aaaa.....Aye mere vatan ke logon!

We always say live for today and don't waste time worrying about tomorrow. But what keeps us up at night is knowing that tomorrow is roaring down on us like a tsunami, and a lot of us don't know how to swim! But the soldiers of 33 Assam Rifles know the art of swimming better than anyone else!

I've heard that our happiness level remains mostly stable throughout our lives, no matter what happens. Win the lottery, and whatever happiness the money brings will fade. Lose a loved one, and we bounce back. According to the psychologists, we have a happiness set point. We don't deviate too far from it. Maybe trauma was the same way.....(These lines are for commanding officer 33 Assam Rifles who lost two sons of his battalion(MD)!

Tragedies in Manipur have happened in a heap but we will recite two:

A tragic incident involved Colonel Viplav Tripathi, an Indian Army officer from Manipur, who was killed with his wife and son by militants in an ambush in 2021.

More recently, the story of Serto Thangthang Kom, an Army jawan on leave in 2023, who was abducted and murdered by unidentified miscreants in his own village, highlights the dangers faced by soldiers and their families in the region. He was killed by a single bullet to the head, and his son was the sole eyewitness to the abduction. The jawan was abducted by "unidentified miscreants" while on leave in Manipur. His body was found in Khuningthek Village.

Facts from history!

The Insurgency in Northeast India is an ongoing armed conflict in a number of India's northeastern states involving several militant groups with various political ideologies, including separatism and Christian nationalism and the Indian government. The northeastern states are connected to the rest of India by the Siliguri Corridor, a strip of land as narrow as 14.29 miles (23.00 km) wide.

Northeastern India consists of seven states (also known as the Seven Sister States): Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura, Arunachal Pradesh, Mizoram, Manipur, and Nagaland.

Tensions existed between insurgents in these states and the central government as well as amongst their native indigenous people and migrants from other parts of India and illegal immigrants.

We will concentrate on Manipur today:

The annexation of Manipur in 1949 led to split in the polity of Manipur. Political organizations such as Manipur State Congress actively campaigned for union with India while organizations such as Praja Sangh and other parties opposed the union.s

During this time, Hijam Irabot, a leader of the Communist Party of Manipur was in touch with the Communist Party of Burma to arrange for the training of the militant wing of the party, the Red Guards. After Irabot's death the movement split into various factions.

In the second wave of the insurgency, the first separatist faction, known as United National Liberation Front (UNLF), was founded on 24 November 1964.

However, they did not take armed action until 1991. Between 1977 and 1980, the People's Liberation Army of



Manipur (PLA), People's Revolutionary Party of Kangleipak (PREPAK) and the Kangleipak Communist Party (KCP), were formed, immediately joining the war.

Naga insurgency began in the 1980s with the founding of the National Socialist Council of Nagaland.

This was followed by the formation of Kuki National Front and the Kuki National Organisation and its armed wing Kuki National Army in 1987 and 1988 respectively.

On 8 September 1980, Manipur was declared an area of disturbance, when the Indian Government imposed the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act, 1958 on the region; the act currently remains in force. The provision was lifted in various parts of Manipur in March 2023.

The parallel rise of Naga nationalism in neighboring Nagaland led to the emergence of National Socialist Council of Nagaland (NSCN) activities in Manipur.

Clashes between the Isak-Muivah and Khaplang factions of NSCN further aggravated tensions, as Kuki tribes began creating their own guerrilla groups in order to protect their interests from alleged Naga violations.

Other ethnic groups such as Paite, Vaiphei, Pangals and Hmars followed suit establishing militant groups.

This was just a brief and now we will come to the subject in hand!

Two Assam Rifles personnel killed, five injured in terrorist ambush in Manipur's Bishnupur district The injured were taken to a hospital by police and locals, another official said.

Unidentified gunmen ambushed a mini truck carrying Assam Rifles personnel in Manipur on Friday, killing two and injuring four others.

The incident occurred at around 5:45 pm in the Nambol Sabal Leikai area of Bishnupur district. Nambol is around 15 km from the state capital of Imphal.

"In general area, Nambol Sabal Leikai, the column was ambushed by unidentified terrorists on the Highway, in the denotified area of Manipur. In the ensuing action, two personnel of Assam Rifles were martyred and five are injured who have since been evacuated to RIMS and are currently stable," an army statement said.

The attack came two days before a bandh called by valley-based rebel groups opposing Manipur's merger agreement of September 21, 1949. In recent months, the police and security forces apprehended several militants in the state.

2 Detained, Van Seized:

Two people were detained from Manipur on Saturday in connection with the ambush on an Assam Rifles convoy earlier this week that killed two soldiers and injured five others. A van, suspected to have been used in the incident, was also recovered from Mutum Yangbi in Imphal - nearly 12 km from the incident site, officials said.

According to the police, the recovered vehicle has multiple owners, all of whom are identified.

"During the last 24 hours, the overall law-and-order situation in the state was tense but under control. In the follow-up to the incident at Nambol Sabal Leikai in which two personnel of the Assam Rifles were martyred, security forces carried

"In general area, Nambol Sabal Leikai, the column was ambushed by unidentified terrorists on the Highway, in the denotified area of Manipur. In the ensuing action, two personnel of Assam Rifles were martyred and five are injured who have since been evacuated to RIMS and are currently stable," an army statement said. The attack came two days before a bandh called by valley-based rebel groups opposing Manipur's merger agreement of September 21, 1949. In recent months, the police and security forces apprehended several militants in the state

out a massive operation in Shantipur and Ishok areas," the statement read.

Naib Subedar Shyam Gurung and Rifleman Ranjit Singh Kashyap attained martyrdom, Officials said that the terrorists fired at the paramilitary forces' 407 Tata vehicle while it was travelling from its Patsoi company operating base to Nambol base at 5.50 pm. This is on the same road that Prime Minister Narendra Modi had taken during his recent visit to Manipur.

A day after the incident, a high-level meeting was held, chaired by Governor Ajay Kumar Bhalla, to discuss boosting security arrangements in vulnerable and sensitive areas of Manipur. Top state government officials and senior police personnel were present in the meeting.

"The discussion stressed the need for coordinated action among all security agencies to ensure swift identification of the perpetrators. It was also resolved that security arrangements must be further strengthened in vulnerable and sensitive areas, including highways, transit routes, and border zones," the Raj Bhavan said.

Manipur has witnessed ethnic violence between two communities, the Meitei community and the Kuki tribes, since 2023, over a range of issues such as land rights and political representation. Over 260 have died in the violence, and nearly 50,000 have been internally displaced.

Nambol Sabal Leikai, about 10 km from the site, during operations in Shantipur and Ishok areas.

Manipur: Prime accused in Nambol ambush arrested:

A joint team comprising Imphal West Police, Bishnupur Police, 33 Assam Rifles, and other security forces launched a special operation around 1 am.

In a major breakthrough in law and order, security forces arrested the prime accused involved in the recent ambush

on security personnel at Sabal Leikai, Nambol, which killed two jawans of the Assam Rifles and injured five others, officials said.

According to a police report, acting on intelligence inputs about the presence of armed militants in the Kameng area of Imphal West district, a joint team comprising Imphal West Police, Bishnupur Police, 33 Assam Rifles, and other security forces launched a special operation around 1 am.

During the operation, one person identified as Khundongbam Ojit Singh alias Keikal (47), son of late Kh. Mani Singh of Awang Leikinhabhi Awang Leikai, Imphal West, was apprehended.

"At the spot examination, he admitted that he is a bailed-out member of the PLA. He further stated that he continues to work for the PLA," the police said.

During interrogation, Singh revealed that he had been arrested earlier on April 22, 2007. Officials further stated that his examination confirmed his direct involvement in the September 19 ambush at Sabal Leikai, Nambol, around 5:30 pm, which targeted personnel of the 33 Assam Rifles.

After opening fire on the Assam Rifles personnel, Singh and his associates fled towards the Loktak Lake side, where they hid their arms and ammunition at a secret location, the report added.

Based on his disclosure, security forces recovered a huge cache of arms and ammunition used in the ambush. The recoveries include one A4 rifle with four magazines, one HK rifle with two magazines, two AK rifles with five magazines, one INSAS rifle with three magazines, and three lathode shells. In addition, 170 rounds of AK ammunition, 216 rounds of M-16 ammunition, 67 rounds of INSAS ammunition, one mobile handset, a wallet, and an Aadhaar card were also seized.

Examination of the arrested person is ongoing, and police said certain leads have been established. Raids are being carried out to apprehend other suspects involved in the Nambol ambush, they added.

Zara aankh mein bhar lo paani, jo shaheed hue hain unki, zara yaad karo qurbaani! Aye mere vatan ke logon, zara aankh mein bhar lo paani, Jo Shahid Hue Hein Unki, Zaraa Yaad Karo qurbaani!.....(The two who got martyred were heroes)

A peep into behind the curtain:

The People's Liberation Army of Manipur (PLA-MP) is a separatist militant group fighting for an independent and socialist Manipur, a state in northeastern India, through armed insurgency. It is the military wing of the Revolutionary People's Front and was formed between 1977 and 1980, alongside other insurgent groups like the People's Revolutionary Party of Kangleipak (PREPAK) and the Kangleipak Communist Party (KCP). Recently,

Key Aspects of the PLA-MP: Goal: To establish an independent and socialist Manipur. Methods: It engages in armed insurgency against the Indian state. Political Wing: The PLA is part of the Revolutionary People's Front (RPF). Historical Context: Formed around the late 1970s, it is one of several insurgent groups

operating in Manipur. The group's activities highlight ongoing tensions and conflict within the region, which is home to various ethnic groups including the dominant Meitei people and Kuki-Zo tribes.

Solemn Tributes:

Solemn tributes were paid to Nb Sub Shyam Gurung and Rfn Ranjeet Singh Kashyap who made the supreme sacrifice during an ambush at Nambol Sabal Leikai, Bishnupur, Manipur on 19 September 2025 while returning from flood relief operations.

A wreath-laying ceremony was held at Mantripukhri Garrison, Imphal where Hon'ble Governor of Manipur Shri Ajay Kumar Bhalla and Lt Gen Ram Chander Tiwari, PVSM, UYSM, AVSM, SM, GOC-in-C Eastern Command along with personnel from Assam Rifles, CAPFs, BSF and Manipur Police paid their respects to the fallen soldiers.

Lieutenant General Vikas Lakhera, AVSM, SM, Director General of #Assam-Rifles & all ranks, salute the valiant soldiers who made the supreme sacrifice in the line of duty on 19 Sept.

Locals condemn the attack:

The people of Manipur gathered today in heartfelt candlelight vigils and peaceful protests to condemn the cowardly Nambol Ambush of 19 September 2025. Communities across the state stood shoulder to shoulder, expressing solidarity with the brave soldiers and their families.

We pay our deepest respects to Naib Subedar Shyam Gurung and Rifleman Ranjit Singh Kashyap, who made the supreme sacrifice in the line of duty. Their courage, devotion, and love for the nation will remain a guiding light for generations.

Let us honor their memory by standing united for peace, justice and harmony.

Assam Rifles: Guardians of Peace and Humanity in Manipur

In the wake of a deeply disturbing and cowardly attack on personnel of the Assam Rifles, the people of Manipur and the nation must confront a harsh truth. This act of violence—perpetrated under the cover of darkness in a denotified AFSPA zone—was not only a direct assault on the brave soldiers of India's oldest paramilitary force, but a betrayal of the very spirit of unity and compassion they represent.

The Assam Rifles, deployed across Manipur, have been relentlessly working to restore peace and stability amidst ongoing inter-community tensions. Their operations, conducted in close coordination with local police, target insurgent elements and anti-national miscreants who thrive on extortion and fear. These soldiers have consistently demonstrated restraint and professionalism, even in volatile environments where civilian safety remains paramount.

Beyond their security mandate, Assam Rifles has emerged as a transformative force in Manipur's social landscape. Their efforts to combat drug trafficking, illicit liquor trade, and substance abuse have been instrumental in protecting the youth and nurturing a healthier society. Their role in securing the Indo-Myanmar border—often in treacherous terrain and remote outposts—underscores their unmatched dedication and grit.

What truly sets Assam Rifles apart is their humanitarian outreach. From flood relief and medical aid to clean water initiatives and solar lighting, their benevolent acts have touched countless lives. Their commitment to inclusive development is evident in their support for skill-building, education, and cultural engagement—empowering young minds across all communities and genders.

It is therefore unconscionable that such a heinous act was committed against these very men who had spent their day providing flood relief to affected citizens. The timing and location of the attack—designed to prevent retaliation and maximize harm—reveal a malicious intent that must be condemned in the strongest terms.

The final line: Jab ghayal hua himaalay, khatre mein padi aazadi, jab tak thi saans lade vo, jab tak thi saans lade vo, phir apni laash bichha di, sangeen pe dhar kar maatha, so gaye amar balidaani, Jo Shahid Hue Hein Unki, Zaraa Yaad Karo qurbaani!.....! Again with moist eyes we close this story!

Fresh Fruits and Vegetables: The Healthiest Food on Earth



■ Sahil Manzoor Bhatti

Fresh fruits and vegetables are undoubtedly the healthiest foodstuffs available on this earth. They are packed with essential nutrients such as multivitamins, minerals, fiber, and all the basic components our body needs for proper functioning.

Although fruits and vegetables are seasonal, one fortunate fact is that nature has bestowed us with a wide variety of them throughout the year. Some are native, while others are imported from neighboring countries, ensuring availability across all seasons.

Today, the fruit sector not only uplifts the economy of the country but also provides employment to thousands of farmers across different age groups. In this article, I will highlight the amazing health benefits of one of the fastest and most beneficial fruits enjoyed worldwide—the pomegranate.

Pomegranate – A Nutrient-Packed Superfruit

Pomegranate (*Punica granatum*) is a round fruit that somewhat resembles an apple. It is widely cultivated in the Middle East and across the globe. Inside its thick, inedible peel are hundreds of juicy, red seeds called arils, which are the edible part of the fruit. Arils are rich in fiber, vitamins, minerals, and bioactive plant compounds.

Pomegranates also contain two unique medicinal compounds: Punicalagins – extremely powerful antioxidants found in the juice and peel.

Punicic acid – a fatty acid responsible for many of the fruit's health benefits.

Health Benefits of Pomegranate

1. **Lowers Blood Pressure**
High blood pressure, or hypertension, is one of the leading causes of heart attacks and strokes. Studies show that regular consumption of pomegranate juice significantly reduces blood pressure in people with hypertension.

2. **Supports Joint Health and Arthritis Relief**

Arthritis involves inflammation in the joints. Research suggests that pomegranate's anti-inflammatory

properties may help reduce symptoms, making it beneficial for arthritis patients.

3. **Reduces Risk of Heart Disease**
Heart disease remains the world's leading cause of premature death. Pomegranates, with their antioxidant compounds, help protect the heart and improve overall cardiovascular health.

Availability and Cultural Relevance

In Kashmir valley, fruits often become expensive and harder to find in bulk during winters. Yet, those who understand their nutritional value make sure to enjoy them despite the cost. Pomegranates, in particular, remain a favorite for both their unique taste and immense health benefits.

Conclusion

Fruits and vegetables are nature's greatest gifts. Among them, pomegranate stands out as one of the most beneficial fruits, loved globally for its taste and powerful medicinal properties. By including pomegranate in our diet, we can take a simple yet effective step toward better health and well-being.

sahilmanzoor0401@gmail.com

The Gym Is Not a Studio: Reclaiming Workout From The Camera



■ Dr. Navin Kumar

The gym, once a sanctuary for physical and mental transformation, has increasingly become a stage for content creation. Driven by the rise of social media, workout spaces are transforming into backdrops for carefully curated videos and photos, where dumbbells serve as props and squat racks double as filming locations. This shift undermines the gym's original purpose—a space for focused effort and personal growth—turning workouts into public spectacles. This article explores the physiological and psychological consequences of this trend, supported by global data, and proposes actionable solutions to restore the gym as a place of authentic fitness.

The Rise of Filming Culture

The global proliferation of social media platforms has redefined fitness culture. A 2024 report by Statista indicates that over 4.9 billion people use social media worldwide, with fitness-related content generating significant engagement. Platforms like Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube have created a culture where workouts are often evaluated not by personal progress but by metrics such as likes, comments, and shares. For many, the gym has become a content studio, where the pursuit of a viral post overshadows the pursuit of a personal best.

This trend is particularly pronounced among younger demographics. A 2023 study published in *Frontiers in Psychology* found that 68% of gym-goers aged 18–34 reported feeling pressure to document their workouts online. While social media can motivate some, it often shifts the focus from intrinsic goals—like strength or health—to extrinsic validation, eroding the essence of fitness.

Physiological and Psychological Costs

The divided attention—between lifting and filming—undermines the focus required for safe, effective workouts. The pressure to impress an online audience often leads to "ego lifting," where individuals lift weights beyond their capacity, sacrificing form. The American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM) reports that improper form contributes to approximately 30% of gym-related injuries, including herniated discs and muscle tears. For example, a rounded back during a deadlift, often exacerbated by rushed filming, significantly increases spinal injury risk. Effective core engagement is critical for compound lifts like squats and deadlifts. When attention is diverted to camera angles or lighting, individuals may neglect to brace their core, exposing the spine to improper loading and shearing forces—a leading cause of lower back pain. Filming also prioritizes explosive, visually appealing lifts over controlled movements. Neglecting the eccentric phase (lowering the weight) reduces muscle activation and increases injury risk, undermining long-term progress.

The filming culture also takes a psychological toll. The constant need to broadcast workouts shifts the focus from self-improvement to self-presentation. A 2023 study in *Body Image* found that frequent exposure to fitness influencer content correlates with a 20% increase in body dissatisfaction and heightened anxiety among gym-goers. This phenomenon, known as self-objectification, leads individuals to view their bodies as objects for external judgment rather than tools for strength and resilience. For fitness influencers, whose livelihoods often depend on online presence, the gym is a workplace. However, this model has permeated the broader population, creating a culture where workouts are validated by social media engagement rather than personal achievement. The intrinsic joy of exercise—rooted in the sensation of effort and progress—is often replaced by anxiety over capturing the "perfect" shot.

Reclaiming the Gym: A Path Forward

Restoring the gym as a space for authentic fitness requires both individual and collective action. Gym-goers should prioritize intrinsic goals, such as improving strength by 10% over six months or mastering proper form. We need to remember why we started in the first place. Was it to build a following, or was it to build a stronger, healthier body? The answer for most is the latter. Let's begin by leaving our cameras in our bags. Let's redirect our focus to the sensation of the lift, the burn in the muscles, and the feeling of accomplishment that comes from within. The gym is not a studio—it is a space for sweat, effort, and transformation. The rise of social media has blurred the line between fitness and performance, compromising safety and mental well-being. By refocusing on the intrinsic value of exercise, implementing thoughtful policies, and building a community of mutual respect, we can reclaim the gym as a sanctuary for personal growth.

Let's prioritize our form over our feed. While some gyms have started to establish clear policies regarding filming, a collective change in mindset is perhaps the most powerful tool. The gym is a shared space, and a community thrives on mutual consideration and a common purpose. Let's make the gym a place of sweat, not selfies. A place of hard work, not performance. Let us reclaim the floor, the equipment, and the purpose of our time there. The gym is not a studio; it is a place of self-improvement. Let us treat it that way. Let us lift for strength, not likes, and make the gym floor a place of progress, not spectacle.

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KVK Kulgam and REACHA Conclude Month-Long Skill Development Training on Cutting and Tailoring

■ **Farooq Rather**

KULGAM, SEP 25: The Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK) Kulgam, in collaboration with REACHA, successfully concluded a one-month Skill Development Training Programme on Cutting and Tailoring at Wanpora Khudwani, Kulgam. The programme, which began on August 18, 2025, aimed to empower unemployed, educated rural girls of the district by equipping them with practical skills for sustain-

able livelihoods.

A total of 30 participants, aged between 18 and 40 years, underwent hands-on training in garment cutting, tailoring, and stitching techniques. The training focused on building professional competencies that can lead to self-employment, entrepreneurship, and financial independence.

The valedictory function was held with great enthusiasm and was graced by Dr. Manzoor Ahmad Ganai, Professor & Head,

KVK Kulgam. In his address, he emphasized the critical role of vocational training in strengthening the socio-economic fabric of rural society. "Skill development fosters not only self-reliance but also dignity and confidence, particularly among women," he said.

Dr. Shahid Ahmad Shergojry, Subject Matter Specialist (Animal Science), KVK Kulgam, congratulated the trainees and encouraged them to apply their new skills in launching income-



generating ventures. He added that such programmes are a step forward toward economic self-sufficiency and rural

empowerment.

A special highlight of the event was the address by Ms. Naina Jan, Head of the Self Help

Group for Women Empowerment, Qaimoh, who shared her own journey from grassroots to self-reliance. She urged the trainees to form self-help groups (SHGs) to access markets and financial support. "When women work collectively, they can turn individual skills into successful, sustainable businesses," she noted.

The programme concluded with an interactive feedback session, where participants expressed heartfelt gratitude

to KVK Kulgam and REACHA for the opportunity. Many shared their ambitions to set up small tailoring units in their localities, aiming to create jobs not only for themselves but also for other women in the community. This training initiative reaffirmed KVK Kulgam's commitment to women empowerment, rural entrepreneurship, and skill development as a means to build a more self-reliant and economically active society in rural Kashmir.

Kulgam Police Arrests Drug Peddler in Qazigund, Contraband Substance Seized

■ **Farooq Rather**

KULGAM, SEP 25: In its continued crackdown against the menace of drugs and to safeguard the younger generation from falling prey to substance abuse, Kulgam Police today achieved a major success by arresting a drug peddler in Qazigund and recovering contraband substance from his possession.

Acting on specific input, a police team from Police Station Qazigund established a checkpoint at Bonigam crossing. During the naka checking, a suspicious person was intercepted and identified as Waseem Ahmad

Reshi, son of Ghulam Rasool Reshi, resident of Berigam. On thorough search, police recovered 4.8 grams of heroin-like contraband substance from his possession. The accused was immediately taken into custody on the spot.

Accordingly, a case vide FIR No. 188/2025 under relevant provisions of law has been registered at Police Station Qazigund and investigation has been initiated. Police are probing all possible forward and backward linkages of the arrested peddler, including his source of procurement and distribution network. More arrests and recoveries are likely in

the coming days.

Kulgam Police reiterates its firm zero-tolerance policy against drug trafficking and assures the public that strict action will be taken against all individuals involved in this menace which poses a grave threat to society.

On this occasion, SSP Kulgam Shri Sahil Sarangal-IPS appealed to the general public to cooperate with police in the fight against drugs. He urged people, especially youth, to remain vigilant and report any information related to drug peddling or trafficking to the nearest police unit, assuring that identity of informants will be kept strictly confidential.

AM/NS India Launches Optigal® Prime in J&K

■ **HT News Desk**

SRINAGAR/JAMMU, SEP 25:

ArcelorMittal Nippon Steel India (AM/NS India) has launched Optigal® Prime – a high-performance, colour-coated steel engineered to stringent European standards – in Jammu & Kashmir. The Union Territory's intense cold, long monsoons, and freeze-thaw cycles often lead to rust and erode steel's structural integrity, driving demand for highly durable steel that resists corrosion. Optigal® Prime is designed to meet this urgent need, making it ideal for mountain homes as well as large-scale, high-end infrastructure and construction projects such as state-of-the-art airports, railway stations, highways, and other critical developments across the region.

Developed by ArcelorMittal – one of its parent companies, Optigal® range sets a new benchmark for durability. The product's debut in Jammu & Kashmir strengthens AM/NS India's leadership in pioneering a new market segment for high-quality C4 specialty steel – a grade previously unavailable in the country, making the company the sole domestic producer.

Mr. Ranjan Dhar, Director and Vice President of Sales & Marketing

at ArcelorMittal Nippon Steel India (AM/NS India) said, "Optigal® Prime's availability in Jammu & Kashmir reiterates our commitment to provide quality, durable, and sustainable innovations to our diverse range of customers, be it individual home builders or customers involved in large-scale projects. The European standard Optigal® range is engineered to perform in harsh environments, offering unmatched corrosion resistance and durability. We believe this offering will play a key role in building future-ready construction and infrastructure across the region which is quality conscious. This new offering is available for the first time in India, outside of Europe where it has been a favourite product."

Mr Dhar also highlighted AM/NS India's recent contributions to the region's infrastructure transformation, including supplying steel for two iconic projects: the world's highest rail bridge – 'Chenab Bridge' (with 100% of steel supplied); and India's first and only cable-stayed rail bridge – 'Anji Khad Bridge' (with 70% of steel supplied).

Optigal® Prime offers a 15-year warranty and advanced finishes such as Silicon Modified Polyester (SMP), Super Durable Polyester

(SDP), and Polyvinylidene Fluoride (PVDF). Designed for roofing, cladding, and a range of architectural applications, it is built for environments that demand resilience. The technology of Zinc-Aluminium-Magnesium coating used for it provides up to three times the protection against corrosion and weathering compared to conventional coatings.

Six specialised variants, High Gloss, Anti-Dust, Anti-Graffiti, Anti-Static, Anti-Microbial, and Cool Roof, make Optigal® Prime a versatile range of high-performance steel. Whether used in sloping mountain home roofs or cladding for public buildings that face year-round weather swings in Jammu and Kashmir, the variants are built to ensure endurance without compromise.

Manufactured at AM/NS India's advanced facility in Pune, Optigal® Prime reflects the 'Make in India' mission and meets strict sustainability standards. It features low Volatile Organic Compounds (VOC), contains no heavy metals or hexavalent chromium, and is fully recyclable. The company currently produces seven lakh tonnes of colour-coated steel annually, with plans to reach 1 million tonnes.

KVIC Launches 'Seva Parv' Drive in Kashmir to Empower SC/ST Beneficiaries under PMEGP

■ **Farooq Rather**

SRINAGAR, SEP 25: The Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC) has kickstarted a special drive under the nationwide Mission Seva Parv in Kashmir, with a focused commitment to support Scheduled Caste (SC) and Scheduled Tribe (ST) beneficiaries under the Prime Minister's Employment Generation Programme (PMEGP).

As part of the initiative, a high-level Bankers' Meeting was convened at the Conference Hall, Sanat Ghar, Bemina, Srinagar, on 25th September 2025, to assess and expedite the processing of SC/ST cases under PMEGP. The meeting was chaired by Shri Khalid Majeed, Director, Industries & Commerce, Kashmir, alongside Shri Rajesh Kumar, State Director, KVIC; Shri Anil Kumar Sharma, Nodal Officer (PMEGP); and representatives from UTLCB, DICs, KVIB, Department of Posts, Lead District Managers (LDMs), and various leading banks. The programme began with the Swadeshi Pledge in honor of the Khadi Mahotsav, symbolizing the KVIC's enduring



commitment to self-reliance and local enterprise.

During the meeting, Sh. Anil Kumar Sharma delivered a comprehensive presentation highlighting:

The overall performance of PMEGP in the UT of Jammu & Kashmir.

Progress in sanctioning and disbursing loans for SC/ST beneficiaries.

Detailed modalities and objectives of the Seva Parv special drive.

Key directives issued during the session included: All pending and rectification cases of SC/ST beneficiaries must be cleared before 2nd October 2025.

Banks and implementing agencies were instructed to prioritize and expedite these cases.

Special emphasis was placed on ensuring that beneficiaries from minority communities, women, Persons with Disabilities (PWDs), and ex-servicemen—who also fall under the SC/ST category—submit valid SC/ST certificates for smooth subsidy release.

Director Industries & Commerce, Shri Khalid Majeed, stressed the importance of departmental synergy and directed banks to fully cooperate with the Department of Posts for timely physical verification of units and to ensure accurate implementation.

State Director, KVIC Jammu, Shri Rajesh Kumar, reiterated that the drive is a reflection of the Commission's mission for inclusive development. "SC/ST beneficiaries remain at the core of our focus under PMEGP. Through this initiative, we aim to clear backlogs and ensure timely financial support," he said.

The meeting concluded with a renewed commitment from all stakeholders to work in a time-bound and coordinated manner, ensuring that priority support reaches the most deserving sections of society under the spirit of Seva Parv.

Fine of Rs.88,000 imposed on erring FBOs under FS&SA at Handwara

■ **HT News Desk**

KUPWARA, SEP 25: Additional Deputy Commissioner, (ADC), Handwara, Javed Naseem Masoodi who is also Adjudicating Officer Handwara today imposed a fine of Rs.88,000 on various erring Food Business operators (FBOs) for violations of various provisions of Food Safety and Standard Act (FS&SA) 2006.

The fine was imposed on the erring traders (for miss branded and sub standard food) during the proceeding of cases related to the FS&SA Act 2006 which were listed



before the Adjudicating officer.

The Adjudicating officer warned them to abide by the legal regulations adding that non-compliance of Food safety and standards Act-2006 and rules there under by the food business operators will be dealt with more strictness in coming time.

Public Notice

I, Nasreena Jan, D/o Mangya Chichi, R/o Laripora Pahalgam, hereby inform the general public that my Date of Birth has been recorded as 08-02-2019.

I am applying for issuance of a new Date of Birth Certificate from Block Pahalgam.

If anybody has any objection regarding the same, they may contact the concerned authorities within seven (7) days of publication of this notice. After that, no objection will be entertained.

Sd/- Nasreena Jan

Public Notice

It is hereby notified for the information of the general public that I, Hajra Afrose, daughter of Nishat Afrose Khan and Fehmida Begum, resident of Kandi, Karnah, Kupwara, am applying for issuance of my Date of Birth Certificate.

If any person has any objection in this regard, he/she may submit the same in writing to the concerned authority within five (05) days from the date of publication of this notice. No objection shall be entertained after the expiry of the said period.

Particulars:

Name: Hajra Afrose

Father's Name: Nishat Afrose Khan

Mother's Name: Fehmida Begum

Date of Birth: 22/09/2007

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Govt. of Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir

Office of the District Sheep Husbandry Officer Pulwama (Technical Section)

Expression of Interest for supply of Livestock

This office is going to establish sheep units under different schemes among selected beneficiaries for the year 2025-26. As such expression of interest is invited from the interested parties / Sheep Farmers for supply of Sheep (Both male & female Hoggets) within age group of 1 year to 2.5 years to this office as per mentioned specification.

The specification of the animals to be supplied to this office shall be as under:

S.No	Sex	Species	Age	Wool Quality	Breed
1	Female	Ovine	1 Year to 2.5 Years	Fine white in colour without any coloured spots	Cross Bred Merino or Cross Bred Corrie dale

Terms and Conditions

Maximum age of animals shall be upto 2.5 years only.

The Minimum body weight of the female animal shall be 25 - 30 kgs and that of male should not be less than 35 kgs on live weight basis.

The animal should be free from any diseases and deformity

Rates per kgs live body weight shall be specified including breed value and transport charges.

The department reserves the right to reject the expression of interest of any supplier without assigning any reason thereof

The party selected shall have to supply sheep units complete in all aspects.

The expression of interest in all aspects as specified above shall be submitted to this office by or before 04/10/2025.

No: DSHOP/Tech/2025-26/1947 | Dated: 24/09/2025

Sd/- District Sheep Husbandry Officer Pulwama

DIPK: 6521/25 | Dated: 25-09-2025

Himayat creating pathways for rural youth empowerment: Javid Dar

Hails mission for shaping futures, announces its expansion to agri-sectors

■ HT News Desk / DIPR

SRINAGAR, SEP 25: Minister for Agriculture Production, Rural Development Department and Panchayati Raj, Cooperative and Election Department Javid Ahmad Dar, today lauded Himayat for creating a unique platform that offers rural youth an opportunity to shape their skills and build independent futures.

While speaking at the Himayat Alumni Meet 2025 in Srinagar, where several beneficiaries shared their success stories, the Minister said most participants came from humble backgrounds and had advanced in life through resilience and determination. "Himayat is a unique platform that offers rural youth an opportunity to shape their skills and build independent futures," he noted.

He added that in today's world, academic qualifications alone are not enough, skill is the real

currency.

The Minister urged that skill development should extend to modern farming techniques, soil testing, livestock care, and even the use of artificial intelligence in agriculture. "If we train our youth in these areas, it can spark a real revolution," he said.

Citing inspiring success stories of Himayat trainees, Dar said every individual must write their own journey of achievement despite hardships. Encouraging the youth, he quoted: "The essential thing in life is not conquering, but fighting back."

He emphasized that honesty, hard work, and discipline as the foundations of lasting success. "Shortcuts never bring real achievements. Competition should be faced with courage and preparation," he stressed.

Dar also called for regular personality development train-



ing alongside skill trades to boost youth confidence. He congratulated the participants and lauded the Seva Parv initiative, running from September 17 to October 2 across the country, as a platform to highlight grassroots

progress and youth empowerment.

"Every household faces difficulties, but we must overcome them, polish our skills, and move forward," the Minister said.

Secretary, Rural Development

Department (RDD) & Panchayati Raj, Mohammad Aijaz Asad, in his remarks, said the event was not merely an alumni meet but a journey that reflected "stories of struggle and success" of youth from remote areas of

Jammu and Kashmir who through the Himayat Mission, have found their path to self-reliance.

"The alumni who shared their journeys today are a source of inspiration for the trainees present here. It shows that Himayat is not just training but also a ray of hope and a path to success," he noted.

The Secretary emphasized that the government is not only imparting skills but also committed to tracking the post-training journey of candidates, ensuring placements and further interventions wherever needed. He congratulated the Himayat Mission team for sustaining this engagement and called for more such alumni meets in the future.

He announced that Himayat 2.0 will soon be rolled out with additional training sectors, including agriculture, dairy, horticulture, and farming. "By adding these sectors, we aim to give rural youth more opportunities

and pathways for success," he said.

Linking the programme to the nationwide Seva Parv initiative launched by the Prime Minister on September 17, Asad said the campaign, running till October 2, seeks to connect people with various schemes and highlight stories of empowerment.

Chief Operating Officer, Himayat, Rajneesh Gupta, also shared key insights into the program's impact during the Alumni Meet, underscoring its role in empowering youth across Jammu and Kashmir.

"As of now, Himayat has trained more than 34,000 candidates and approximately 15,000 of them have been successfully employed," he informed.

The event was attended by Director RDD Kashmir, Shabir Hussain Bhat; Chief Executive Officer, IWMP, Rajnish Kumar; and other officers.

Health Department organises health screening & awareness camps in Doda

■ HT News Desk / DIPR

DODA, SEP 25: On the 9th day of the ongoing "Swasth Nari, Sashakt Parivar" campaign, the Health Department Doda, under the guidance of Chief Medical Officer Dr. Om Kumar, organized a series of health screening-cum-awareness camps across different locations of the district today.

The initiative was aimed at delivering quality healthcare services to people in far-flung and underserved areas, with a special focus on women's health, maternal and child care, preventive healthcare, and community awareness.

The activities conducted at the camps included antenatal care (ANC) services, general health check-ups, non-communicable disease (NCD) and hemoglobin (Hb) screening, along with dedicated awareness sessions on hygiene, nutrition, and menstrual health management. Free medicines were also distributed among the beneficiaries to ensure immediate healthcare support.

The camps were held at Village Zadan, Rajpura Gandoh, Bhella Thathi, and GHSS Gundna (Chat), ensuring wide community participation and outreach. The events were closely monitored by the concerned Block Medical Officers to guarantee efficiency, accountability, and effective service delivery.

During the awareness sessions,



health workers emphasized the importance of regular screening for early detection of diseases, safe motherhood practices, proper nutrition for adolescent girls, and the need to break taboos surrounding menstrual hygiene. Community members, especially women and adolescent girls, were encouraged to adopt healthy lifestyles and utilize available healthcare facilities.

Speaking on the occasion, CMODr. Om Kumar said that the department is committed to strengthening grassroots healthcare delivery by reaching the last mile. He highlighted that the Swasth Nari, Sashakt Parivar campaign is not only about providing medical

services but also about empowering women with knowledge and confidence to take charge of their health, thereby contributing to healthier families and stronger communities.

The initiative received overwhelming response from locals, teachers, PRIs, ASHAs, and Anganwadi workers, who actively participated in mobilizing beneficiaries and spreading the campaign's key messages.

The Health Department has also announced that similar screening and awareness camps will continue in the coming days in other remote blocks of Doda to ensure universal health coverage and inclusivity under the campaign.

Cleanliness drive conducted at bus stand Ramnagar under Sewa Parv

■ HT News Desk / DIPR

RAMNAGAR, SEP 25: As part of the ongoing Sewa Parv, the Block Development Office Ramnagar today organized an extensive cleanliness drive at the main bus stand area. The drive, themed "Ek Din, Ek Ghanta, Ek Saath Shramdaan," witnessed enthusiastic participation from officials, staff members, PRI representatives, traders, transporters, students, and local citizens.

The initiative focused on removing litter, sweeping the premises, clearing clogged drains, and disposing of plastic waste and polybags, thereby restoring the bus stand to a cleaner and more commuter-friendly condition. Participants also took a Swachhta Pledge, committing to dedicate at least one hour every week towards cleanliness and community service in their neighborhoods.

The drive not only cleaned a vital public space but also served as an awareness campaign, motivating people to adopt cleanliness as a daily habit and discourage indiscriminate dumping of garbage in public areas. Speakers at the event stressed that maintaining hygienic surroundings at the bus stand — the gateway for thousands of commuters — was essential for public health, civic pride, and a welcoming environment.

The Block Development Officer



appreciated the support of citizens and underlined that Sewa Parv is about collective responsibility and people's participation. He urged shopkeepers, vendors, and transport operators to regularly contribute to the upkeep of their immediate surroundings.

The programme concluded with a message that cleanliness is not a one-time event but a sustained movement, and that only through Jan Bhagidari (public participation) can the dream of a clean, green, and prosperous Ramnagar be realized.

Plantation drive, other activities held at GDC Ramkote

■ HT News Desk / DIPR

KATHUA, SEP 25: Government Degree College Ramkote organized a Plantation Drive today here on the College campus as a part of ongoing activities under Seva Parv celebrations.

The College Principal Dr. Rakesh Kumar Koul led the drive organised to promote ecological awareness, educate participants on environmental issues and foster a sense of collective responsibility for a greener future.

The plantation drive was followed by a Swachata Rally under the banner of Swachata hi Seva Campaign 2025.

The rally started from the College Campus and marched through the adjoining lanes chanting slogans in favour of cleanliness, hygiene and environment conservation. Nearly 50 NSS volunteers participated in the rally and made it a successful event.

The activities were coordinated by Prof. Pan-kaj Nandan, IQAC Convener, Prof. Suresh Chander, Convener NSS, Prof. Anu Sharma NSS, Prof. Vasundra Raje, HoD Sociology and Mr. Krishan Singh.

Balwant Thakur Meets Director of National School of Drama

Explores New Pathways for Strengthening Theatre Education in Jammu & Kashmir

■ HT News Desk / DIPR

JAMMU, SEP 25: Eminent theatre director and former cultural diplomat of India to South Africa and Mauritius, Balwant Thakur, today met Chittaranjan Tripathi, Director of the National School of Drama (NSD), in New Delhi. The meeting revolved around a series of constructive discussions aimed at strengthening theatre education in Jammu & Kashmir and identifying new avenues for trained theatre professionals in the context of India's evolving educational landscape.

With the introduction of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, which emphasizes arts-integrated learning and theatre-in-education as vital tools for holistic development, the demand for trained theatre educators is growing rapidly. Jammu & Kashmir, with its rich cultural heritage and an emerging interest in creative education, stands at a critical juncture where specialized theatre edu-



cation can play a transformative role.

Balwant Thakur highlighted the urgent need to address this demand by creating platforms that

can nurture and employ young theatre practitioners. He urged the NSD Director to consider this initiative as a priority, emphasizing that a structured system of

training and engagement would not only strengthen the cultural fabric of Jammu & Kashmir but also provide sustainable employment opportunities to youth across the region.

"For decades, many talented and qualified young theatre enthusiasts, due to the lack of employment avenues, were compelled to migrate towards Bollywood and other entertainment industries. However, with the NEP 2020 now mandating arts-integrated education across schools and colleges in India, the scenario has changed dramatically. There is an urgent requirement for professional theatre educators, and Jammu & Kashmir can become a model region for implementing this policy," Thakur noted.

Director NSD, Chittaranjan Tripathi, welcomed the suggestions and acknowledged the importance of bridging the gap between theatre training and educational implementation. Both leaders agreed that a roadmap is needed

to create dedicated programs, workshops, and teacher-training modules in the region to empower educators and open new horizons for cultural and educational development.

The meeting marks a significant step towards integrating theatre as a pedagogical tool within mainstream education while simultaneously creating meaningful employment for serious theatre practitioners. If implemented effectively, such initiatives can contribute not only to the advancement of theatre as an art form but also to the holistic growth of students, equipping them with creativity, empathy, and critical thinking skills for the future.

Referring to the recently concluded International Theatre Festival by NSD in Singapore, Balwant Thakur complimented the Director for projecting Indian theatre internationally and also desired to expand and explore this novice mission to other countries and in Europe in particular.

Rs 900 Cr Scam: Economic Offender Bhupesh Arora's Bail Plea Rejected

■ **United News of India**

NEW DELHI, SEP 25: A Special PMLA Court in New Delhi has rejected the bail plea of Bhupesh Arora, a key accused economic offender in one of the country's largest cyber-enabled investment frauds, carried out through the LOXAM app.

Arora was arrested by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) on July 11, after evading law enforcement for several years.

He had fled to Dubai in early 2022, along with associates, to escape ongoing cyber fraud investigations, and was apprehended upon his clandestine re-entry into India via the Nepal border.

The ED launched a PMLA investigation against Xindai Technologies Pvt Ltd, Bhupesh

Arora, Rohit Vij, and others, based on a First Information Report (FIR) registered by the Cyber Police in Hyderabad.

The FIR alleged that certain Chinese nationals, in connivance with Indian associates, defrauded thousands of investors through the 'LOXAM' investment app by falsely projecting it as part of a reputed French multinational company and promising unrealistic returns.

The funds collected through the app were later diverted out of the country after being converted into foreign exchange via various money changers.

The ED has filed a Prosecution Complaint under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), exposing the LOXAM app as a fraudulent platform.



Thousands of unsuspecting investors were lured with promises of exorbitant profits, only to have their money siphoned

off through a complex web of shell companies, virtual accounts, and payment gateways. Searches conducted at

five premises during the investigation led to the seizure of digital devices and properties worth Rs 2.01 crore.

An analysis of more than 500 bank accounts revealed that Proceeds of Crime (PoC) amounting to over Rs 311 crore were routed through Xindai Technologies Pvt Ltd and related entities.

These funds were then layered into the accounts of Ranjan Moneycorp Pvt Ltd and KDS Forex Pvt Ltd, before being converted into foreign currency and remitted abroad via hawala channels.

The probe also uncovered foreign exchange transactions totalling nearly Rs 903 crore, routed through multiple shell entities that operated using common IP addresses, a red flag for money laundering typologies, as identified by the Financial Action Task Force (FATF).

Bhupesh Arora has been

identified as a central conspirator in laundering the illicit proceeds.

Evidence, including statements recorded under Section 50 of the PMLA, confirms his role in facilitating cash withdrawals, arranging forex conversions, and orchestrating the cross-border movement of funds in collaboration with money changers.

The LOXAM scam highlights how international cyber-crime syndicates are exploiting digital platforms to place, layer, and integrate illicit funds.

The case underscores the ED's commitment to dismantling such transnational fraud networks and ensuring the perpetrators of cyber-enabled money laundering are brought to justice. UNI

BJP launches 90-day Swadeshi campaign nationwide

■ **United News of India**

NEW DELHI, SEP 25: Marking the birth anniversary of Pandit Deendayal Upadhyaya, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) today launched a 90-day national campaign to promote the ideals of Swadeshi and Aatmanirbhar Bharat.

The campaign will run until December 25, the birth anniversary of former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee.

Announcing the initiative at a press conference, BJP National General Secretary and Rajya Sabha MP Arun Singh said the campaign undertaken at the behest of Prime Minister Narendra Modi is aimed at transforming the 'Vocal for Local' push into a mass movement.

Party cadres will mobilise communities through a range of outreach programmes, including melas, yatras, and awareness drives. Citizens will be encouraged to prioritise indigenous products, while shopkeepers will be asked to prominently display Indian-made goods.

"From September 25 to December 25, BJP workers across the country will reach every household with the message of Swadeshi. More than 20,000 Aatmanirbhar Bharat Sankalp meetings, 1,000



Swadeshi Melas, and 500 Sankalp Rath Yatras will be organised. Padyatras, youth conventions, women's meetings, traders' sammelans, college competitions, and social media outreach will also be part of the drive," Singh said.

"Every shop will be urged to display boards reading 'Proudly Swadeshi'. People will be asked to sign pledge forms committing to adopt Swadeshi. Certificates will be awarded to shopkeepers who sell only indigenous products," he added.

Singh referenced the 1905 Swadeshi movement during the Bengal Partition and invoked leaders such as Rabindranath Tagore and Bankim Chatterjee, who, he noted, had "voiced the spirit of self-reliance against colonial rule."

He also highlighted the progress made under the Modi government, stating that the Vocal for Local campaign has already delivered tangible economic results.

"Khadi sales have grown from Rs 31,000 crore under UPA to Rs 1.7 lakh crore today. India, which had just two mobile phone factories in 2014, now has 300 units and exports phones worth Rs 2 lakh crore," Singh said.

However, the party clarified that the initiative is not about boycotts, but about building long-term economic independence and cultural confidence.

"This vision will lead India towards becoming a developed nation by 2047, as envisaged by Prime Minister Modi," he said. UNI

BIRLA TO INAUGURATE TRAINING PROGRAMME ON LEGISLATIVE DRAFTING IN CHANDIGARH TODAY

■ **United News of India**

NEW DELHI, SEP 25: Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla will inaugurate a training programme on legislative drafting for officials of Haryana Vidhan Sabha and Government of Haryana at Mahatma Gandhi State Institute of Public Administration (MGSIPA), Chandigarh, tomorrow.

The training programme is being organised by the Institute of Constitutional and Parliamentary Studies (ICPS) in collaboration with Haryana Vidhan Sabha, an official statement said.

Spanning two days, the programme will cover a broad range of topics, including constitutional values shaping legislative drafting, nature and language of drafting, art of crafting precise legal language and rules of interpretation, among others. This training initiative is part of the flagship legislative drafting programme launched by ICPS under the aegis of the Ministry of Home Affairs.

The inaugural session of the programme was held from 15-26 May 2023, and was inaugurated by Home Minister Amit Shah.

In addition to sessions con-



Chandni Chowk part of heritage, says Delhi CM, directs officials to ensure cleanliness

■ **United News of India**

NEW DELHI, SEP 25: Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta today reviewed cleanliness at Chandni Chowk while she took part in the Shramdaan under the ongoing cleanliness service campaign. Gupta told reporters that the historic area is part of Delhi's heritage, and during the festivals, the vibrancy of the religious places located here increases manifold.

CM directed the officials concerned to improve the overall cleanliness of the area.

Gupta noted that cleanliness and better maintenance become even more essential during the festive season, urging the locals that just as one keeps his or her home clean, similarly everyone should take responsibility to keep the markets and streets also clean.

"Let's make cleanliness a habit and work together to make Delhi clean and beautiful," the CM added.

Gupta joined the campaign organised by the local MP Praveen Khadwal, who also urged her to expand the jurisdiction of Shahjahanabad



Redevelopment Corporation, and rename it as 'Indraprastha Redevelopment Board.'

Gupta also mentioned that Delhi is moving forward presently, drawing inspiration from the sense of service and civic responsibility kindled nationwide through the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Meanwhile, a local body in the area, Chandni Chowk Nagrik Manch, also requested the CM to organise

"Chandni Chowk Festival."

General Secretary of this resident's body, who is also the Delhi BJP Media Head, Praveen Shankar Kapoor, accompanied the chief minister during the cleanliness drive and the inspection. The CM instructed PWD and Jal Board officials to immediately clean the roadside drains, repair and repaint the street side curbs, enhance cleanliness and greenery on the central verge, and ensure that all streetlights are repaired and made functional by Dussehra.

Gupta also directed the Deputy Commissioner of MCD and the Additional DCP of Police to reduce encroachments on footpaths, ensure cleanliness is done & maintained at least three times a day.

Addressing a local grievance, the CM directed PWD officials to immediately resolve the issue related to boom barriers outside Dariba.

Responding to another resident's complaint, she instructed the MCD's senior official to ensure proper cleanliness before the Ramli procession and take necessary steps to reduce rickshaw congestion. UNI

Trump blames "radical leftists" for deadly shooting at ICE field office in Texas

■ **United News of India**

WASHINGTON, SEP 25: US President Donald Trump has blamed the "radical leftists" for the deadly shooting at a US Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) field office in Dallas, Texas.

Condemning the attack as despicable, Trump wrote on Truth Social yesterday that the brave men and women of ICE are just trying to do their jobs, but they are facing an "unprecedented increase in threats, violence, and attacks by Deranged Radical Leftists."

"This violence is the result of the Radical Left Democrats constantly demonising Law Enforcement, calling for ICE to be demolished, and comparing ICE Officers to 'Nazis,'" Trump said. "The continuing violence from Radical Left Terrorists, in the aftermath of Charlie Kirk's assassination, must be stopped," he said.

The US president said he will be signing an executive order this week to "dismantle these Domestic Terrorism Networks." Yesterday, one detainee was killed and two others critically injured in the shooting, while no officers were harmed. The Mexican Consulate in Dallas confirmed that one of the victims in critical condition is a citizen of Mexico.

Officials have not yet revealed the motive of the shooter, who died of a self-inflicted gunshot. UNI

MEXICO SLAMS US FOR IMMIGRATION RAIDS

■ **United News of India**

MEXICO CITY, SEP 25: Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum on Wednesday condemned the immigration raids carried out in the United States by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), saying a diplomatic note was sent to Washington requesting an investigation into the recent deaths of two Mexican nationals.

"Yesterday, a diplomatic note was sent on this case, requesting that all investigations be carried out, and if anyone is responsible for human rights violations, that they be punished," the president said at her daily press conference.

Mexican migrants Ismael Ayala-Urbe and Silverio Villegas Gonzalez died following ICE raids and detention in the United States.

Sheinbaum lamented the criminalisation of migrants in the United States and

stressed her government's initiatives in support of Mexicans living there, including establishing an emergency hotline and strengthening services that offer technical and legal advice.

Washington's aggressive anti-immigrant policies impact not just Mexicans but also the US economy, where business owners "in agriculture and services are reporting problems because they cannot hire workers," said Sheinbaum.

The president reiterated that Mexicans living in the United States, whether they are first, second, third, or fourth generation, contribute significantly to the US economy, and they also contribute to the Mexican economy through the remittances they send home.

"We oppose such treatment and the raids that have been carried out, which, in addition, cause fear and anxiety," she added. UNI

Iran, Russia sign MoU on building small nuclear power plants

■ **United News of India**

TEHRAN, SEP 25: Iran and Russia on Wednesday signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) on the construction of small modular reactors (SMRs) in Iran.

The MoU was signed between Mohammad Eslami, chief of the Atomic Energy Organisation of Iran (AEOL), and Alexey Likhachev, head of Russia's State Atomic Energy Corporation Rosatom in Moscow, according to a statement released on the AEOL's website. The statement said the MoU aims to expand cooperation on the peaceful uses of nuclear energy to promote sustainable development, strengthen energy security and advance technology, in compliance with the two countries' national regulations and international obligations.

It added that under the MoU, the two sides would prepare and sign contracts for designing and constructing nuclear



power plants based on SMRs in the future.

Heading a delegation, Eslami arrived in Moscow on Monday to meet Russian officials and participate in the World Atomic Week forum, which runs from Sept. 25 to 28. Upon his arrival, Eslami said that within the framework of a contract between Tehran and Moscow, the latter is expected to build eight nuclear power plants in Iran, including four in the southern province of Bushehr, as the country seeks to generate 20,000 megawatts of electricity in the coming years. UNI

SA-WI T20I series likely to be reduced due to clash with World Cup

The five T20Is were the only home series for the South Africa men's team this summer

■ **Firdose Moonda**

DUBAI: South Africa may be forced to shorten their only men's international home series this summer - against West Indies - for both teams to get to the 2026 T20 World Cup in India and Sri Lanka on time. South Africa are scheduled to host West Indies for five T20Is between January 27 and February 6, but as reported by ESPNcricinfo last week, the T20 World Cup is set to be played between February 7 and March 8.

On August 28, the ICC sent participating teams a Member Information Pack, with information regarding warm-up matches. The document, seen by ESPNcricinfo, states that the ICC's support period - the time in which teams are expected to arrive in the host countries and play non-obligatory warm-up games - starts on January 31. That has moved up from February 3, while CSA had drawn up their home fixtures with the understanding that South Africa would have enough time to travel to the T20 World Cup.

It is not mandatory for countries

to spend the entire support period in the host venue, but the ICC asked participating countries to list by September 5 how many warm-up matches they want to play, with options ranging between none to a maximum of two. Only if a country opts for two matches, will the support period become one week prior to the tournament opener. CSA are currently in discussions with CWI to see when West Indies want to arrive in the subcontinent and how many matches they want to play there. If teams opt for no warm-up games, the mandatory support period is four days prior to the first match on February 7. If a team opts for one warm-up then the support period will five to six days prior to the tournament opener.

The warm-up information is significant only because it allows the ICC to confirm an arrival date for each team.

Even if West Indies do not want to play any T20 World Cup warm-up matches, CSA will still have to cull at least two of the five T20Is; the last two games are on February



3 and 6. The fixtures cannot be played any earlier with the SA20 ending on January 25. CSA is currently deciding which venues should host the matches against West

Indies - at present, the venues are likely to be Paarl, Newlands, Buffalo Park in East London, Centurion and Johannesburg.

CSA always planned on having

a less-crowded summer this year to prepare their venues for the 2027 ODI World Cup. Currently, drop-in pitches are in development around the country

England and Sri Lanka narrowly escape this problem; their three-T20I series in Sri Lanka will be played between January 30 and February 3. They also have the benefit of being in one of the host nations at the time.

South Africa do not have any other men's international fixtures at home this season, in part because their all-format tour of India ends on December 19, which left no space for matches before the original window of the SA20 in the first week of January. The SA20 has now been moved into the festive period and will start on December 26.

However, the league is not the only reason for the lack of men's international fixtures. CSA always planned on having a less-crowded summer this year to prepare their venues for the 2027 ODI World Cup. Currently, drop-in pitches are in development around the country. Next season, South Africa play ten home Tests (eight men's and two women's), including three-match series against Australia and England.

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