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J&K's Cultural Renaissance a Shared Mission: LG Sinha

Calls on Artists, Writers to Reimagine the UT as a Global Art Hub at Kesar Art Circle's Golden Jubilee

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU, JAN 12: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Monday underscored the collective responsibility of society to transform Jammu and Kashmir into a global centre of art by preserving its spiritual and cultural heritage while embracing new creative horizons.

Addressing the Golden Jubilee celebrations of Kesar Art Circle at Kala Kendra Jammu, the Lieutenant Governor said art serves as a powerful bridge between diverse cultures and plays a crucial role in reviving the region's ancient spiritual and cultural legacy.



"From our deep-rooted spiritual and cultural traditions to new creative expressions, it is our shared duty to reimagine Jammu and Kashmir as an art hub. Painters, writers and creative minds must actively contribute to shaping the artistic future of the Union Territory," he said.

On the occasion, the Lieutenant Governor felicitated noted painter Bhushan Kesar, founder of Kesar Art Circle, lauding his lifelong contribution to nurturing and mentoring thousands of artists who have gone on to achieve national and international recognition.

Emphasising that preservation of

● Turn on Page 2

Yuva Shakti Will Script India's Rise to 2047: PM Modi

Addresses Viksit Bharat Young Leaders Dialogue, Calls Youth The Driving Force of a Developed India

■ HT NEWS DESK / AGENCIES

NEW DELHI, JAN 12: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday said India's youth power, or Yuva Shakti, stands at the forefront of nation-building and will play a decisive role in shaping the country's journey towards becoming a developed nation by 2047.

Addressing the concluding session of the Viksit Bharat Young Leaders Dialogue 2026, the Prime Minister said his faith in the younger generation has remained unwavering over the years. Recalling his early years in public office, he noted that while today's youth have grown up in a rapidly changing India, their energy, talent and

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5th J&K Assembly Session Begins Feb 2, Budget on Feb 6

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU, JAN 12: The Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly Secretariat has issued the provisional calendar for the sittings of the 5th Session of the Legislative Assembly of the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir, scheduled to begin on February 2, 2026, at Jammu.

As per the calendar, the session will commence on Monday, February 2, with the Lieutenant Governor's Address to the House. This will be followed by a three-day discussion on the Motion of Thanks on the LG's Address from February 3 to February 5,

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CM Omar Reviews Jammu Projects, Pushes Flood Restoration

₹19.05 Cr Projects Inaugurated, ₹13.48 Cr Works Laid

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU, JAN 12: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah today chaired a high-level meeting to review the overall development scenario of Jammu district, with a focus on expediting key infrastructure projects, improving irrigation facilities, strengthening flood restoration works and ensuring optimal utilisation of funds.



The meeting was attended by Deputy Chief Minister Surinder Kumar Choudhary, Ministers Sakina Itoo, Javed Ahmad Rana, Javid Ahmed Dar and Satish Sharma, Advisor to the Chief Minister Nasir Aslam Wani, Chairman District Development Council Jammu Bharat Bhushan, Member of Parliament Jammu Jugal Kishore Sharma and all

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Class 10 Results Ready, Await JKBOSE Chairman

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, JAN 12: Jammu and Kashmir Education Minister Sakina Itoo on Monday said the Class 10 examination results for the winter zone of Kashmir are ready and will be declared on time, with the only delay being the pending appointment of the Chairman of the Jammu and Kashmir Board of School Education (JKBOSE).

Responding to concerns over the delay, Itoo while speaking to KNS, said the declaration of results requires approval from the JKBOSE Chairman, who is the

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CS Releases DIPR Calendar-2026 and Official Diary



■ HT NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU, JAN 12: Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo today released the Calendar-2026 and Official Diary of

the Department of Information & Public Relations (DIPR) at a function held here.

The Calendar and Diary, brought out annually by the Department of

Information & Public Relations, highlight important landmarks, cultural heritage, developmental initiatives and key achievements

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Intense cold grips Kashmir, fog disrupts life in Jammu

MeT forecasts dry weather till Jan 15, snow likely later

■ HT NEWS NETWORK / KNO

SRINAGAR, JAN 12: An intense cold wave continued to affect Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh on Monday, disrupting normal life and business activity, even as minimum temperatures across most parts of the region showed a marginal improvement compared to the previous day. According to the details available with the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO)

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CS Sets Feb 15 Deadline for Girls' Toilets in Schools

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU, JAN 12: Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo today reviewed the status of availability and functionality of toilet facilities for girl students in government schools across J&K.

The meeting was attended by Additional Chief Secretary, Public Works Department (PWD), Secretary, School Education Department, the Directors of School Education, Chief Engineers, and other senior officers concerned.

During the review, the Chief Secretary assessed the infrastructure created under various schemes aimed at ensuring adequate sanitation facilities for girl students, emphasizing that access to clean and functional toilets is a critical factor in promoting attendance, retention and dignity of students in schools.

The Chief Secretary took a detailed assessment of

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CS Reviews Phase-II, Urges Replication of Phase-I Success

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU, JAN 12: Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo, today reviewed the preparations for Phase-II of the Commemoration of 150 Years of 'Vande Mataram', the National Song of India, scheduled to be observed across the J&K from January 19 to January 26, 2026, coinciding with the Republic Day celebrations together with the national celebrations held on this occasion.

The review meeting was attended by Principal Secretary, Culture Department; Commissioner Secretary, Tourism;

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J&K's Cultural.....

sacred heritage is the foundation for building the future, the Lieutenant Governor described artists, thinkers, painters and sculptors as the "conscience of society," whose work inspires democratic participation and social progress. He noted that art forms such as painting and sculpture are not mere luxuries, but vital forces that influence how societies think, feel and evolve.

Calling upon the youth to harness art for positive change, he said art acts both as a mirror and a guide, helping young generations stay rooted in their cultural identity while contributing to the vision of a developed India.

The Lieutenant Governor also inaugurated a painting exhibition and felicitated several artists during the event.

Among those present were Padma Shri Dr S.P. Varma, Brij Mohan Sharma, Principal Secretary Culture; Shruti Awasthi, Regional Director, IGNCA; K.K. Sidha, Director Archives; Harvinder Kour, Secretary JKAACL; Dr Javid Rahi, Secretary, Kala Kendra Jammu, senior officials, prominent artists and citizens from various walks of life.

Yuva Shakti.....

aspirations continue to inspire national progress.

Modi said the period leading up to 2047 when India completes 100 years of Independence will be critical for both the nation and its youth. "The strength of young Indians will define India's strength, and their success will take the country to new heights," he remarked, underscoring that youth leadership is central to achieving the vision of Viksit Bharat.

The Prime Minister noted that the dialogue coincided with National Youth Day, observed on the birth anniversary of Swami Vivekananda, calling his life and ideals a guiding light for generations. He said January 12 was deliberately chosen for the dialogue to draw inspiration from Vivekananda's message of youth empowerment and nation-building.

Highlighting the scale of youth participation, Modi described the initiative as unprecedented, citing over five million registrations and more than three million young people contributing ideas through the Viksit Bharat Challenge. He praised the quality of suggestions, particularly on themes such as women-led development and youth participation in democracy, calling them reflective of the resolve of India's Amrit Peedhi.

Reflecting on governance before 2014, the Prime Minister said youth once faced policy paralysis, red tape and limited opportunities. He contrasted this with the present ecosystem shaped by reforms like Startup India, Digital India and Ease of Doing Business, which have opened new avenues for innovation and entrepreneurship.

Citing the transformation of the startup landscape, Modi said India had fewer than 500 registered startups before 2014, while today youth-led enterprises are driving growth across sectors. He pointed to reforms in space, defence and drone technology, noting that opening these areas to private participation has enabled young innovators to flourish. He highlighted startups such as Skyroot Aerospace and Agnikul Cosmos as examples of India's growing global footprint in advanced technologies.

The Prime Minister also spoke about the rapid expansion of the digital and creative economy, describing it as the rise of India's Orange Economy spanning culture, media, gaming, music and immersive technologies. He said platforms like the World Audio-Visual and Entertainment Summit have become launch pads for young creators.

Emphasising continued reforms, Modi highlighted tax relief measures, simplified compliance, next-generation GST reforms and policy initiatives aimed at ensuring energy security and job creation. He urged young Indians to pursue their ideas with confidence, assuring them that the government remains committed to supporting innovation and youth-led development across all sectors.

CM Omar.....

Members of the Legislative Assembly from the district.

Chief Secretary Atal Dulloo, Additional Chief Secretary to the Chief Minister Dheeraj Gupta, Divisional Commissioner Jammu Ramesh Kumar, Inspector General of Police Jammu B.S. Tuti, Deputy Commissioner Jammu Rakesh Minhas, heads of departments, and representatives of NHAI, NHIDCL, BRO and other concerned agencies were also present on the occasion.

Addressing the meeting, the Chief Minister gave directions for early completion of development works taken up under CAPEX strictly as per availability of funds. He assured the MLAs that each of them would receive a detailed communication outlining the status of projects that can be taken up, those that could not be initiated so far, the reasons thereof, and the future roadmap.

"It should not happen that you feel a project has been taken on priority and then put on a back burner. You will receive a letter explaining what we are doing, what we have done and what we intend to do in future, so that everyone is kept in the picture," the Chief Minister said.

On irrigation, the Chief Minister emphasised the need for a comprehensive ground-level

inspection, particularly of tail-end areas of canals, to ensure proper desilting and equitable water distribution to farmers. He directed the concerned Minister to prepare a timetable and conduct on-site inspections along with the local MLAs.

Recalling past challenges, the Chief Minister said that farmers at the tail end of canals often suffered due to lack of desilting, which prevented water from reaching them when it was most needed. He stressed the need to take up desilting works in convergence with MGNREGA wherever feasible, so that labour costs are met under MGNREGA while material and machinery costs are borne by the department.

Referring to the issue of farmers being forced to use pumps due to inadequate canal irrigation, the Chief Minister said that unauthorised electricity connections for irrigation would not be disconnected and would be regularised as non-metered connections. He further announced that no hike in electricity charges for farmers would be proposed this year.

Directing the Deputy Commissioner Jammu, the Chief Minister called for maximum utilisation of funds in the remaining months of the financial year. He complimented the district administration for good performance and better-than-expected fund utilisation so far.

He stressed the need for close monitoring of SASCI projects, especially greenfield projects, to ensure timely fund utilisation and avoid additional financial burden under CAPEX. He also directed that MLAs be taken into confidence while organising Mission Yuva events in their constituencies to build momentum for employment generation initiatives.

Highlighting that more than ₹1400 crore has been sanctioned for permanent flood restoration works, the Chief Minister instructed that the share allocated to Jammu district must be utilised judiciously to ensure durable and long-term solutions.

"The water levels we are seeing now are similar to those witnessed in 2014. Our restoration works must be planned keeping that in mind so that the assets created are not washed away during the next heavy rains. Restoration must be permanent, not temporary," he asserted.

The Chief Minister complimented the district administration and the elected representatives for their collective efforts. During the meeting, the concerned Ministers also made interventions related to their respective departments and issued on-the-spot directions to the officers for prompt redressal of issues.

Earlier, Deputy Commissioner Jammu gave a detailed presentation on the financial and physical progress of various departments. He highlighted the achievements and ongoing works in sectors including Public Works (R&B), PMGSY, electricity, PMAY-G and PMAY-U, school education, skill development, health, youth services and sports, revenue, labour, agriculture and allied sectors, forest, geology and mining, tribal affairs and other departments.

Chairman DDC Jammu, Member of Parliament and MLAs also raised issues, demands and grievances pertaining to their respective constituencies for early resolution.

On the occasion, the Chief Minister laid e-foundation stones of housing and urban development projects worth ₹13.48 crore and e-inaugurated projects related to school education, housing and urban development and rural development amounting to ₹19.05 crore.

He also flagged off truck-mounted jetting-cum-sewer suction machines (6000 litres), truck-mounted jetting-cum-sewer suction machines (4000 litres), jetting, grabbing and rodding machines (3000 litres) and open nallah desilting machines mounted on tipper chasis with extendable crane.

An ambulance for CHC Pallanwalla was also flagged off on the occasion.

5th J&K.....

culminating with the reply to the discussion.

A key highlight of the session as per news agency Kashmir Indepth News Service (KINS) will be the presentation of the Budget. On Friday, February 6, the government will present the Annual Financial Statement of Expenditure for the year 2026-27, along with the Supplementary Statement of Expenditure for 2025-26. The Budget will then be taken up for general discussion on February 7, 9 and 10, with the government's reply scheduled on February 10.

The Assembly will take up Demands for Grants from February 11 to February 13, and again from February 16 to February 19, with holidays and off days in between. February 14 has been marked as an off day, while February 8 and February 15 will be holidays.

The Appropriation Bills are scheduled to be taken up on Friday, February 27, followed by Government Business on February 28. The House will resume further business in the last week of March, with Private Members' Bills on March 30 and April 2, and Private Members' Resolutions on March 31 and April 3. Government Business is again listed for April 4, 2026.

The provisional calendar has been issued under the signature of Speaker Advocate Abdul Rahim Rather.

The session is expected to witness detailed deliberations on the government's financial roadmap, policy priorities, and legislative agenda for the coming year.(KINS)

Class 10.....

competent authority to take such decisions. "There is a proper procedure in place. Without the Chairman's approval, the results cannot be finalised. However, the results are ready and will be announced in time, even earlier than last year," the minister said.

JKBOSE Secretary Ghulam Hussain Sheikh also confirmed that the results are prepared and awaiting formal clearance.

"The only hurdle is the appointment of the Chairman. The government is actively working on it and the appointment is expected shortly," he said.

The delay has caused anxiety among students in Kashmir, with many expressing concern that a late declaration could affect their academic schedules and admission processes. (KNS).

CS Releases.....

of the UT besides serving as an important reference and documentation tool for government functioning.

Speaking on the occasion, the Chief Secretary appreciated the efforts of the Department of Information & Public Relations in effectively documenting and disseminating information related to government policies, programmes and achievements. He underscored the crucial role played by the department in strengthening transparent communication between the government and the public, and in showcasing the socio-economic and developmental progress of Jammu and Kashmir.

Commissioner Secretary, Information and General Administration Department, M. Raju, and Director, Information & Public Relations, Nitish Rajora, were also present on the occasion. Among others present were Special Secretary to the Chief Secretary, K.S. Chib; Special Secretary, General Administration Department, Joginder Singh Rai; Special Secretary to the Chief Secretary, Naginder Singh Jamwal, and other senior officers of the Information Department and concerned officers.

The Calendar-2026 and Diary are expected to serve as valuable resources for government offices, institutions and stakeholders, while also reinforcing the commitment of the administration towards effective public outreach and information dissemination.

Intense cold....

Srinagar recorded a minimum temperature of minus 2.4 degrees Celsius, a significant rise from minus 5.2 degrees Celsius a day earlier. Similar improvement was recorded in other areas, with Qazigund at minus 3.6 degrees compared to minus 5.8 degrees yesterday, and Pahalgam recording minus 3.4 degrees, up from minus 7.6 degrees.

Pulwama, however, remained one of the coldest places in the Valley at minus 6.5 degrees Celsius, though still warmer than Sunday's minus 7.7 degrees. Shopian recorded minus 5.2 degrees, up from minus 8.6 degrees, while Kupwara settled at minus 3.7 degrees, improving from minus 5.6 degrees.

Gulmarg, the ski resort, recorded minus 3.4 degrees, compared to minus 6.2 degrees a day earlier.

In the Jammu region, minimum temperatures hovered above freezing at most places, though dense fog continued to affect normal life.

Jammu city recorded 3.4 degrees Celsius, slightly lower than Sunday's 4.0 degrees, while Banihal settled at 5.1 degrees, down from 7.1 degrees. Samba recorded 0.7 degrees, improving from minus 0.7 degrees, and Rajouri saw temperatures rise to 0.8 degrees from minus 1.6 degrees.

Ladakh remained the coldest region, though temperatures there also showed a slight rise.

Leh recorded a low of minus 10.8 degrees, compared to minus 13.4 degrees a day earlier, while Hanle registered minus 15 degrees, up from minus 16.3 degrees. Kargil recorded minus 9.3 degrees, improving from minus 12.3 degrees.

Officials said dense fog across the plains of Jammu severely impacted vehicular movement during early morning hours, while markets witnessed thin attendance due to harsh weather conditions.

Street vendors and small traders reported reduced business as residents preferred staying indoors.

DRY WEATHER TO PREVAIL TILL JAN 15
The Meteorological Centre Srinagar forecast mainly dry weather till January 15, with cloudiness likely towards the evening.

Light rain or snow is expected at isolated to scattered higher reaches between January 16 and 17, while light to moderate rain or snow may occur at several places between January 20 and 22.

The Met department also said that minimum temperatures are likely to rise gradually, though moderate to dense fog is expected to persist over the plains of Jammu division for the next five days—(KNO)

CS Sets Feb.....

the number of toilets constructed, those under execution and their present functional status. He stressed that mere creation of infrastructure is not sufficient and underlined the need to ensure that all existing toilets are fully functional, with assured water supply and other allied utilities.

Directing strict adherence to timelines, the Chief Secretary instructed that all ongoing works related to construction and upgradation of girls' toilets must be completed by 15th

February. He further asked the School Education Department to ensure that toilets already constructed are made operational in every respect well before the stipulated deadline.

To ensure effective implementation at the ground level, the Chief Secretary ordered the constitution of zone-level committees, comprising officers from both the School Education Department and the Roads & Buildings (R&B) Department. These committees will conduct joint inspections of schools to identify gaps, assess repair and improvement requirements, and oversee execution of necessary works to make the facilities fully functional.

The Chief Secretary underscored that access to clean and functional sanitation facilities is essential for creating a safe, inclusive and girl-friendly learning environment and called for close inter-departmental coordination and continuous monitoring to ensure timely completion and sustained maintenance of the facilities.

During the meeting, Additional Chief Secretary, PWD, Shri Anil Kumar Singh, informed that the department is committed to completing all assigned works within the prescribed timeframe. He added that in locations where conventional construction is not feasible within the deadline, prefabricated toilet structures will be installed to ensure availability of facilities well before the stipulated date.

Giving a detailed presentation, Secretary, School Education Department, Ram Niwas Sharma, informed that out of a total of 18,724 government schools across the Union Territory, 18,023 schools (99.25%) have toilet facilities. He further stated that 17,403 schools (92.29%) have separate toilets for girls, while just 1,321 schools (7.17%) are presently without such facilities.

It was also informed that construction of 265 girls' toilets is currently under execution, while the remaining 1,056 schools without separate toilet facilities for girl students are being taken up in a time-bound manner. These works will be completed before the start of the academic session in winter-zone areas and by 15th February in summer-zone schools across the Union Territory.

CS Reviews.....

Secretary, School Education; Director, School Education, and other senior officers of the concerned departments. Deputy Commissioners from all districts participated in the meeting through video conferencing.

During the review, the Chief Secretary highly appreciated the exemplary performance of all districts during Phase-I, which enabled Jammu & Kashmir to emerge as the top-performing region in the country, surpassing even the largest States in terms of scale, participation and overall impact of the celebrations.

He lauded the coordinated efforts of district administrations, along with the School and Higher Education Departments, for successfully organizing large-scale patriotic and cultural programmes

that effectively showcased the historical, cultural and emotional significance of VandeMataram as a powerful symbol of India's freedom struggle and national unity.

Encouraging the Deputy Commissioners to sustain the momentum, the Chief Secretary urged them to ensure equally stellar performance during Phase-II, beginning January 19. He emphasized that the second phase should further deepen public engagement, particularly among youth, students and community groups, and strengthen the spirit of national pride, unity and patriotism across the Union Territory.

While reviewing the Action Plan for Phase-II, the Chief Secretary underscored the importance of effective publicity, documentation and outreach. He directed that a robust and structured publicity campaign be undertaken through the Directorate of Information & Public Relations (DIPR). Special emphasis was laid on uploading maximum photographs and videos on the dedicated Government of India portal www.vandemataram150.in, along with enhanced outreach through official social media platforms using a common hashtag to maximize visibility at the national level.

Earlier, Principal Secretary, Culture Department, Brij Mohan Sharma, briefed the meeting about the successful conduct of Phase-I celebrations (November 7-14, 2025), in which a mammoth participation of around 1.22 Cr participants was witnessed followed by UP with a participation of 19.35 lakhs and then other states.

Moreover he added that the celebrations here also included grand inaugural and valedictory events at Abhinav Theatre and M.A. Stadium, Jammu, respectively. These events witnessed participation of over 20,000 students, artists and citizens, featuring mass singing of VandeMataram, vibrant patriotic cultural performances and extensive youth participation.

He further informed that the key activities planned during Phase-II include Vande Mataram Torch Relays across all districts to symbolize unity and national pride; mass singing of Vande Mataram at educational institutions, government offices, Panchayat Ghars and community centres; and integration of the Vande Mataram theme in all Republic Day programmes at the UT, district, tehsil and institutional levels.

Additionally, a range of special programmes such as essay writing, poster-making and debate competitions, Vande Mataram exhibitions, and youth marathons will be organized to ensure maximum public participation and awareness, especially among young citizens.

Reiterating his directions to all district administrations and concerned stakeholders, the Chief Secretary stressed that the commemoration of 150 years of Vande Mataram should be observed not merely as a series of events but as a people's movement to reconnect citizens with the ideals of freedom, unity and national pride. He called upon all departments to work with dedication and commitment to make Phase-II celebrations impactful, inclusive and memorable.



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Expedite development of inundation model for flood plain zoning in Kashmir: Div Com to agencies

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, JANUARY 12: Divisional Commissioner Kashmir, Anshul Garg, on Monday directed the concerned agencies to expedite the development of inundation model for flood zoning in Kashmir especially regarding floods with a recurrence interval of once in twenty-five years.

Highlighting the significance of availability of the model, the Divisional Commissioner emphasized that it is critical for enabling the administration to undertake effective planning and response measures to minimize the impact of major floods occurring in a 25-year cycle. He instructed the consultant



engaged by the Jammu and Kashmir Economic Reconstruction Agency (JKERA) to define a clear timeline for the completion of the model,

ensuring high levels of accuracy and reliability. During the meeting, it was informed that the consultancy is

presently working on a hydrological model for major floods with a recurrence interval of once in hundred years.

Meanwhile, the Divisional Commissioner directed the Irrigation and Flood Control (I&FC) Department to obtain digitized maps of Anchar Lake and Wular Lake from the Chief Conservator of Forests to facilitate the identification and delineation of river basins.

The meeting was attended by Deputy Commissioners, the Chief Executive Officer JKERA, Assistant Commissioner Central, Executive Engineers of I&FC, officers from JKWRRA and representatives from Kashmir University.

MISSION VATSALYA BANDIPORA CELEBRATES NATIONAL YOUTH DAY

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

BANDIPORA, JANUARY 12: Mission Vatsalya Bandipora today celebrated National Youth Day with great enthusiasm and fervour at the Officers Academy of Science and Social Sciences, Bandipora, marking the birth anniversary of the great philosopher and youth icon Swami Vivekananda Ji.

The event witnessed the participation of a large gathering of students, teachers, academicians, intellectuals, media persons, and officials from various child protection institutions.

Officials from District Child Protection Unit, Child Welfare Committee (CWC), Juvenile Justice Board, Child Helpline and Child Helpdesk Bandipora were present, reflecting strong inter-departmental coordination for youth and child welfare.

Chairperson CWC Bandipora, in her address, emphasized the timeless teachings of Swami Vivekananda, urging youth to adopt values of discipline, self-confidence, and service to society. She stressed that the youth are the strongest pillar of the nation and play a decisive role in shaping its future.

Protection Officer, DCPU Bandipora, spoke on the responsibilities of young people in nation-building and encouraged students to channelize their energy positively through education, innovation, and social responsibility. He also highlighted the role of Mission Vatsalya in safeguarding the rights and well-being of children and adolescents.

Cordinator CHL addressed the gathering and highlighted Swami Vivekananda Ji's vision of empowered, educated, and morally strong youth. He underlined that today's youth must balance modern education with ethical values to contribute meaningfully



to society and the nation.

To actively engage students, several activities were organized, including a quiz programme and a painting competition, which saw enthusiastic participation from students. The activities aimed at promoting awareness about youth empowerment, national values, and the legacy of Swami Vivekananda Ji.

On the occasion, students, faculty members, and administrators of the Officers Academy of Science and Social Sciences, along with officials of Mission Vatsalya Bandipora, were felicitated in recognition of their contributions towards education, child protection, and youth development.

The programme concluded with a collective commitment of Mission Vatsalya and partnering institutions to nurture responsible, empowered, and socially conscious youth for a stronger nation.

Mission Yuva Workshop for SHGs from NRLM held at Kulgam

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

KULGAM, JANUARY 12: A workshop under Mission Yuva was conducted today in District Kulgam with active participation of Self Help Groups (SHGs) formed under NRLM.

The programme was presided by Additional District Development Commissioner (ADDC) Kulgam, Altaf Ahmad Khan.

During the workshop, the ADDC highlighted the progress of SHGs from information sharing to income enhancement and enterprise development, emphasizing their transformation into sustainable livelihood units. He underlined the importance of strengthening Lakhpati Didi enterprises through continuous mentoring, credit linkage, skill upgradation, and robust market linkages.



Special emphasis was laid on onboarding SHGs under Mission Yuva, with on-the-spot registration facilitated for eligible groups. The participants were sensitized about leveraging the ONDC (Open Network for Digital Commerce) platform to digitally promote and market SHG products, expand outreach, and improve profitability.

The workshop also focused on building SHG capacities to access institutional finance, adopt improved production practices, and integrate with digital and physical markets for long-term sustainability.

The programme was attended by officers from the Lead District Manager (LDM), Employment Department, and other line departments, who assured coordinated support for SHG-led enterprises under Mission Yuva.

The event concluded with interactive discussions and reaffirmation of the district administration's commitment to empowering SHGs and promoting entrepreneurship, particularly under the Lakhpati Didi initiative.

Shopian District mandates GPS installation on Vehicles, Machinery engaged in Mineral Extraction

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

SHOPIAN, JANUARY 12: District Mineral Office, Shopian, has issued directions for mandatory installation of AIS-140 approved GPS tracking devices on all vehicles and machinery engaged in mineral extraction and transportation in the district.

The order is issued in pursuance of the directions from the Directorate of Geology & Mining, J&K and in accordance with the MoEF&CC guidelines (2020) to ensure transparency, effective monitoring, and prevention of illegal mining.

All mineral concessionaires, crusher units, brick kiln holders, and vehicle owners in District Shopian have been instructed to install GPS devices procured from MORTH-empowered vendors.

Further, transportation of minerals shall be permitted only with a valid e-Challan bearing QR code generated through the Department's online portal.

The installation of GPS tracking devices must be completed on or before January 20, 2026. Any non-compliance with these directions shall invite strict action as per the provisions of law.

DLSA Srinagar concludes week-long National Youth Day Legal Awareness Drive

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, JANUARY 12: District Legal Services Authority (DLSA), Srinagar today culminated its comprehensive week-long National Youth Day awareness drive, which commenced on 07 January 2026, by organizing a series of impactful awareness programmes at multiple locations across District Srinagar.

The sustained outreach initiative was designed to sensitize youth and the general public about

legal awareness, social welfare legislations and preventive legal mechanisms, with a special focus on addressing contemporary social challenges affecting society at large.

The main concluding programme was held at Milestones Health & Learning Centre, Nowgam, in collaboration with Horizon Aid Foundation Trust, and witnessed enthusiastic participation from students, youth, educators and other stakeholders.

On the occasion, Deputy Chief

Legal Aid Defence Counsel and Panel Lawyer, DLSA Srinagar, served as resource persons and delivered insightful deliberations on the importance of legal literacy, access to free and competent legal aid services, and the pivotal role of youth in upholding the rule of law and contributing towards a responsible, aware and law-abiding society.

The speakers also emphasized the need for early legal intervention and awareness as effective tools for social reform.

In addition to the main programme, awareness activities were also conducted at Harwan and at the Juvenile Observation Home, where Para Legal Volunteers of DLSA Srinagar actively engaged with participants and local residents. The sessions focused on creating awareness about the harmful effects of drug abuse, its serious legal and social consequences, and the importance of prevention, rehabilitation and community-based support systems, particularly among vulnerable

sections of society.

The week-long awareness drive concluded with a strong and reaffirming message of youth empowerment through enhanced legal literacy, promotion of road safety, prevention of social evils and collective societal responsibility.

The initiative underscored DLSA Srinagar's unwavering commitment to outreach programmes, strengthening legal awareness at the grassroots level and ensuring access to justice for all.

DLSA Srinagar organizes awareness program under “Bal Vivah Mukh Bharat” campaign

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, JANUARY 12: District Legal Services Authority (DLSA), Srinagar organized an awareness program at the Public Library, Baghe-Mehtab, Srinagar under the nationwide campaign “Bal Vivah Mukh Bharat”, aimed at strengthening community awareness and preventive action against child marriage.

During the program, Adv. Sabiya Kausar, Pro-Bono Lawyer, DLSA Srinagar, addressed the participants on various social risk factors affecting youth and families, while also emphasizing the importance of road safety, traffic



discipline and legal protections available to citizens under existing laws. The session highlighted responsible civic conduct and the role of legal awareness in preventing social evils.

Speakers sensitized the participants about the provisions of the Juvenile

Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, underscoring the legal safeguards available for children in need of care and protection.

They elaborated on the legal framework, consequences and preventive strategies related to child marriage, in line with the objectives of the “Bal Vivah Mukh Bharat” campaign.

The programme witnessed active participation from youth and members of the public and concluded with an interactive session, reiterating the collective responsibility of society in ensuring child protection, road safety and access to justice.

MVD conducts road safety programme at Paradise Skill Development Centre Kishtwar

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

KISHTWAR, JANUARY 12: As part of National Road Safety Month 2026 campaign, the Motor Vehicle Department (MVD) conducted a road safety awareness programme here at Paradise Skill Development Centre.

More than 70 students from 10, 11 and 12 classes participated in the programme. Assistant Road Transport Officer Tasleem Wani delivered a PowerPoint presentation, highlighting the importance of safe road behaviour, hazards of underage driving, encouraging the use of protective gear and sensitising students about their role as responsible citizens and



Good Samaritans.

Data on road accidents in Kishtwar district, as per the iRAD report, for the previous three years—2023, 2024 and 2025—was also shared with the participants to highlight accident trends and the importance of road safety. To encourage active participation and reinforce learning, a Road Safety Quiz was also organised during the programme. Students enthusiastically took part in the quiz, demonstrating keen interest and awareness regarding road safety rules. The first five winners of the Road Safety Quiz were felicitated and awarded prizes in recognition of their outstanding knowledge. The initiative was well received by the staff and students of the institute and reaffirmed MVD Kishtwar's commitment to fostering a culture of road safety among young citizens.

7-DAY RESIDENTIAL NSS WINTER CAMP CONCLUDES AT GCW PARADE WITH GRAND VALEDICTORY FUNCTION

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU, JANUARY 12: The Seven-Day NSS Winter Camp (6-12 January 2026) concluded today at Government College for Women Parade Ground with a grand valedictory function, coinciding with National Youth Day. The camp was organized on the theme “Sashakt Yuva, Samarth Bharat.”

The camp was conducted by the NSS Unit of the College, in collaboration with the Jammu & Kashmir Pollution Control Committee (JKPCC), Urban Forestry Division Jammu, Department of Civil Defence and Government Ayurvedic Hospital Jammu with the objective to achieve holistic development of youth through service, discipline, fitness and community engagement.

NSS Programme Officer Dr. Gurpreet Kour, in her welcome address, highlighted the objectives,



structure and outcomes of the seven-day residential camp. “The volunteers stayed on the college campus, learning discipline, teamwork, leadership and collective responsibility in line with the camp theme,” she said.

DySP Department of Civil Defence Zia Ul Haq was the Chief Guest. He emphasized the importance of disaster preparedness, civil defence awareness and active youth participation in nation building.

The programme was presided

over by the College Principal Dr. Ravender Kumar Tickoo. He appreciated the dedication, discipline and enthusiasm displayed by the NSS volunteers and highlighted the significance of NSS activities in shaping socially responsible and empowered citizens.

A major highlight of the valedictory function was a National Integration Fashion Show. Wearing traditional attires, NSS volunteers represented different states of India, symbolizing unity in

diversity. The event was evaluated by an esteemed jury panel comprising Dr. Ritu Mangotra, Dr. Renu Angurana (Associate Professor, English) and Kunal Sharma, Senior DF Trainer.

The Camp Report was presented by NSS Volunteer Diksha Langeh, highlighting the day-wise activities, learning outcomes, community outreach initiatives and overall impact of the seven-day camp.

A plantation drive was organized on the college campus and adopted villages, in collaboration with the Urban Forestry Division Jammu. The NCC Volunteers planted 200 saplings, reinforcing environmental consciousness and sustainable practices.

Additionally, the camp featured academic, fitness and awareness sessions conducted by distinguished resource persons, including Parshotam, Department of Civil Defence Jammu – Civil defence

and disaster preparedness training. Anil Kumar, Junior Environmental Engineer, JKPC – Plastic waste segregation and environmental awareness, Kunal Sharma and Aryan Pandey, Cult Fit Hybrid Gym Jammu – Dance-based cardio fitness sessions, Satyam Mahajan, Cult Fit Hybrid Gym Jammu – Strength training sessions, Vanshika Sharma, Directorate of AYUSH – Yoga and pranayama training experts from Government Ayurvedic Hospital Jammu – Health and wellness awareness.

The valedictory ceremony included cultural performances by NSS volunteers, screening of a camp activity reel, distribution of certificates and felicitation of guests and collaborators.

The proceedings of the programme were efficiently conducted by NSS Volunteer Ritika. The vote of thanks was presented by NSS Volunteer Saliha Sultan.

Satish Sharma exhorts youth to lead India's journey towards Viksit Bharat @2047

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU, JANUARY 12: Minister for Information Technology, Science & Technology, Youth Services & Sports, Administrative Reforms & Institutional Reforms (ARI) & Training, Satish Sharma, today called upon the youth to take a leading role in building a strong, self-reliant and developed India, while addressing the National Youth Day Sammoroh organised by Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU).

Paying rich tributes to Swami Vivekananda on his birth anniversary, the Minister said that the great visionary's clarion call "Arise, awake and stop not till the goal is reached" continues to inspire India's youth to pursue excellence, courage and service. He said that as India moves towards Viksit Bharat @2047, the youth are not just the future but the most powerful force shaping the nation's destiny.

Highlighting the role of IGNOU in democratizing education, Satish Sharma said the institution has



empowered millions of learners, especially those from remote areas, women, working professionals and marginalized sections, by providing flexible and accessible higher

education. He said IGNOU has played a key role in nurturing skilled, confident and socially responsible citizens across the country.

Speaking on the government's vision for youth, the Minister said that India is building a future where quality education, skill development, science, technology

and innovation go hand in hand. He emphasized that the youth must lead in emerging fields such as Artificial Intelligence, space technology, biotechnology, green energy and digital governance, while sports should be promoted as a way of life to build discipline, teamwork and national pride.

Satish Sharma also highlighted the achievements of India's youth in recent years, including their leadership in startups, contributions to landmark space missions like Chandrayaan and Gaganyaan, community service through volunteer programmes and outstanding performances in national and international sports events.

Calling upon the youth to remain rooted in values while embracing the modern technology, the Minister urged them to work with a spirit of innovation, service and integrity.

On the occasion, the Minister reiterated the government's resolve to create a Viksit Bharat that is inclusive, prosperous and globally respected, driven by the energy, talent and commitment of India's youth.

Satish Sharma launches Jammu-Haridwar Yatra Bus service from Panchmukhi Hanuman Mandir

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU, JANUARY 12: Minister for Food, Civil Supplies & Consumer Affairs, Information Technology, Transport, Youth Services & Sports, Science & Technology, Satish Sharma, today flagged off the JKRTC Jammu-Haridwar Yatri Bus service from the revered Panchmukhi Hanuman Mandir, Jewel Chowk, Jammu, marking a significant step towards strengthening pilgrimage tourism and public transport connectivity in Jammu and Kashmir.

Speaking on the occasion, the Minister said that the new service will serve as a spiritual and cultural bridge between Jammu, the City of Temples, and Haridwar, the gateway to the holy River Ganga. He said that lakhs of devotees from Jammu and Kashmir visit Haridwar every year to perform Ganga Aarti, shradh, pind daan and other sacred rituals and this direct service will make their journey safe, comfortable and affordable.

Satish Sharma said the initiative has been launched under the visionary leadership of the Chief Minister with the aim of ensuring that pilgrims do not face any hardship while travelling to major religious destinations. "The dedicated service from Panchmukhi Hanuman Mandir to Jammu Yatri Bhawan, Haridwar will provide seamless direct connectivity, eliminating inconvenience and ensuring peace of mind for devotees," he added.

The Minister informed that the service will be operated with modern, comfortable buses equipped with essential amenities, experienced drivers for safe night travel and affordable fares, keeping in view the needs of common people, senior citizens and families. The buses will provide direct drop-off at Jammu Yatri Bhawan, Haridwar, enabling easy access to Ganga Aarti, religious rituals and accommodation.

Highlighting the government's commitment towards promoting religious tourism and people-centric transport services, Satish Sharma said that improved connectivity to holy shrines such as Vaishno Devi, Amarnath and now Haridwar has significantly transformed pilgrimage travel while also boosting economic activities.

The Minister expressed thanks to the Jammu Yatri Bhawan Trust, the JKRTC management and staff and religious institutions for their support in making the service operational.

He prayed for a safe and blessed journey for all the pilgrims and reaffirmed that the government will continue working towards better transport facilities, enhanced religious tourism and citizen-friendly services across Jammu and Kashmir.

Mission Director Dairy Development J&K reviews working of ASH depts in Udhampur District

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

UDHAMPUR, JANUARY 12: Mission Director Dairy Development J&K, Er. Narinder Singh Bali today undertook an extensive tour of district Udhampur to review ground impact of Animal and Sheep Husbandry sector schemes and initiatives.

The Mission Director was accompanied by Chief Animal Husbandry Officer, Dr. Shwetambri Khajuria and District Sheep Husbandry Officer, Dr. Farhat Bashir.



He inspected dairy farms (satellite heifer units), sheep units, poultry units (commercial layer farm/free-range units) established under the Holistic Agriculture Development Programme (HADP).

The Mission Director interacted with unit holders and beneficiaries taking firsthand feedback on availability of inputs and challenges faced at the ground level. The Farm owners were advised to make proper use of subsidies provided under government schemes to ensure sustainable livelihood generation and enhanced income.

Addressing the unit holders, the Mission Director called for promoting goat farming by constituting SHGs and FPOs. He highlighted the importance of the circular economy and encouraged farmers to establish biogas plants by using dung which can be further used in making vermicompost – the best input for organic farming. He stressed on adopting organic farming practices and aligning livestock rearing activities with climate-resilient practices.

Later, he also inspected infrastructure created under HADP including the Common facilitation Centre, besides the Bailing Unit established under Wool & Pelt project. The visit reaffirmed the department's commitment to promoting sustainable livestock and ensuring the success of welfare-oriented schemes at the grassroots level.

Gool: GDC Campus nearing Completion; KV starts Class work from coming session

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

RAMBAN, JANUARY 12: Sub-Divisional Magistrate (SDM) Gool Imtiaz today reviewed arrangements for the commencement of class work at Kendriya Vidyalaya (KV) School Gool and the functioning of Government Degree College (GDC) Gool. The SDM directed the concerned authorities to complete all required arrangements well in advance to start the class work from the coming session. He emphasized the need for regular monitoring and evaluation to ensure that the institution



meets the prescribed academic and infrastructural standards. The current status of the work on GDC campus building was also reviewed. The SDM directed the PWD to complete the

pending work to facilitate the shifting process. The Principal of College was asked to make necessary preparations for shifting classes to the new building in the upcoming academic session.

DLSA Reasi organises awareness camp on National Youth Day 2026

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

REASI, JANUARY 12: Under the visionary leadership of Khalil Choudhary, Chairman, District Legal Services Authority, Reasi (also Pr. District and Sessions Judge Reasi) and Pooja Gupta, Secretary DLSA Reasi, the District Legal Services Authority Reasi today organised a series of activities cum awareness programs to celebrate National Youth Day 2026 under the theme "Ignite the self, Impact the World". An awareness programs were organised at Bhambla, Ransoo, Laiter and other villages of Mahore in by PLVs of DLSA Reasi and TLSC Mahore.

PLVs conducted interactive awareness programmes, group discussions and community meetings with local youth to highlight the importance of National Youth Day and to commemorate the ideals and teachings of Swami Vivekanand whose vision continues to inspire the youth of the nation. The programmes focused on empowering young people through legal awareness, moral values, discipline, social responsibility and active participation in nation building. During the interactions, PLVs sensitized the youth about various welfare schemes, legal aid services and the role of Legal Services Authorities in ensuring access to justice for all, especially for the marginalized and underprivileged sections of the society.

Emphasis was also laid on motivating



the youth to stay away from social evils, adopt positive life goals and contribute constructively towards peace, harmony and development in their respective areas.

Another program was organised at Shree Vel Ji Vishram Popat Chatravaas Disha Kadmal, Katra by organising sports competition. As many as 20 participants participated in Chess, Carrom Board and Volleyball. Winners were felicitated with trophies and participants were given medals for their active participation.

District-level seminar on Medicinal Plants held at Reasi

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

REASI, JANUARY 12: The Jammu & Kashmir Medicinal Plants Board, in coordination with the Directorate of AYUSH and the District Administration Reasi, today organised a district-level seminar on conservation and cultivation of medicinal plants, besides exploring value addition potential in the sector.

The experts from the Medicinal Plants Board and the Ayush Department delivered detailed presentations on priority medicinal plant species, nursery development, quality standards, post-harvest management and financial assistance for cultivation, processing and value addition units. Participants were also sensitised about biodiversity conservation and the importance of sustainable and regulated harvesting to protect natural resources.

Deputy Commissioner, Nidhi Malik was the chief guest. She highlighted the immense potential of medicinal and aromatic plants cultivation in strengthening rural livelihoods and generating sustainable income.

"There is a need to generate mass awareness related to medicinal plants, government initiatives and entrepreneurial opportunities through Krishi Vigyan Kendras and other outreach platforms," she emphasised and suggested that the farmers associated with integrated farming can



add medicinal plant cultivation to increase their income.

"The farmers and students shall proactively explore opportunities available under AYUSH-related initiatives, centrally sponsored programmes and UT-level interventions," she said, noting that timely awareness and participation would enable stakeholders to fully harness emerging prospects in the medicinal plants sector.

The seminar witnessed the presence of Director Ayush, Dr. Suresh Kumar Sharma, Chief Horticulture Officer, Chief Medical Officer, District Nodal Officer Ayush besides active participation of farmers, students, officers and field functionaries.

Public hearing for minor mineral block held at Jaganoo

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

UDHAMPUR, JANUARY 12: J&K Pollution Control Committee conducted Public hearing for the proposed Minor Mineral Block at Jaganoo. The River Bed Material spread over an area of 9.47 hectare area upstream Jaganoo Bridge has been allotted to private persons as per the prescribed norms.

The hearing was presided over by Additional Deputy Commissioner, Prem Sing Chib in presence of DMO Rajeev Jamwal; Divisional Officer J&K PCC, Deepak Abrol; Divisional Officer J&K PCC, S.K

Tripathi.

A large number of people including ex-Sarpanches and Panches from adjoining villages participated in the proceedings. The views, suggestions and objections of the public were duly video graphed for submission to the Government.

The ADC assured that all aspects discussed at the public hearing would be implemented in a transparent manner.

Divisional Officer J&K PCC highlighted the importance of public hearings for such projects emphasizing that these forums provide a platform to local communities to voice their concerns and suggestions.

KV Campus Building coming up at Jodhpur-Doda DC reviews progress of work

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

DODA, JANUARY 12: Deputy Commissioner Doda, Harvinder Singh today chaired a meeting in the Mini Meeting Hall DC Office Complex to review the progress of work on Kendriya Vidyalaya (KV) campus building coming up here at Jodhpur.

The executing agency, Central Public Works Department (CPWD), gave a comprehensive PPT presentation highlighting the current status of the project.

The meeting was attended by Executive PWD (R&B), representatives from PHE and PDD departments, Principal of Kendriya Vidyalaya, technical experts from the CPWD central team with civil engineers including AEE and JE.

The review covered major components including academic buildings, residential quarters, boundary wall, underground water tank, retaining walls, connecting roads, Breast Wall, electrification works and water supply arrangements. The

Engineers also provided a detailed overview of the construction site, physical progress achieved so far and challenges faced during execution.

Reiterating that the KV project is a long-term investment in the future of children, the DC stressed the importance of high-quality construction, safety standards and timely completion. He reviewed the expected deadlines and urged the executing agency to expedite work without compromising quality.

The Deputy Commissioner inquired about the status of electrification work, being executed in coordination with the Power Development Department (PDD). He emphasized judicious utilization of funds, proper documentation of expenditure and strict adherence to approved designs and specifications. Directions were also issued to ensure scientific dumping and disposal of construction debris to avoid environmental hazards.

HT EDITORIAL

Counsel youth so that stunt driving comes to an end

Over the past few years, a dangerous trend has emerged in the driving of the two wheelers by the youth. A good section of the people driving the two wheelers resort to stunt driving and as such play with their lives. Despite repeated warnings by the traffic police department there has been no end to this dangerous trend of stunts during driving. The incidents might have come down but there is no complete end to the same.

Even though action has been taken against some of the stunt bikers, still then there are many others who take the law in their own hands. These unscrupulous elements carry out different tricks on their bikes, scooters and scooties and as such risk their lives. Some fatal casualties have taken place on this count, but still then there are some people, mostly youth who have this hobby of taking law into their hands and playing with their lives.

Given the fact that stunts are mostly carried out by the youth it is important that the parents of these youth counsel their wards. The parents should counsel their children that their lives are important and they should not take any step that would harm their lives. It has been observed that most of the parents pay no heed to the requests made by the concerned department in this regard. It is due to this reason that the stunts are not coming to an end and the youth continue to flout the rules and regulations.

At the same time the higher-ups of the educational institutions have a responsibility in this regard and they too need to do their bit in this regard. The students of the different educational institutions need to be counselled by their teachers and other staff members so that they become law abiding students and not violators of the law. There is an old saying that nips the evil in the bud. This holds true with the concept of stunt driving by the people, especially youth.

Once the students are counselled about the dangers of stunt driving then there are chances that there would be best results. In such a manner the future generation will be saved and they will become ideal citizens of the country. Once the citizens are law abiding then it is quite clear that the country progresses by leaps and bounds with the youth leading the charge.

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Rebuilding Economy Through Self-Reliance and Social Balance



■ NASEER AHMAD

Economic scenario of J&K Calls for collective Introspection. Besides various root causes that have affected growth, a significant part of the challenge lies in internal socio-economic patterns that can, with timely correction, be turned into opportunities.

Over the past two decades, rising lifestyle aspirations and social extravagance particularly around housing and marriages have increased household debt and reduced long-term financial security.

At the same time, the gradual conversion of agricultural land for non-farm uses has weakened food self-reliance and reduced the role of agriculture, once the Valley's economic backbone.

Another concern is the growing dependence on external skilled labour, leading to an outflow of locally generated income. This highlights the urgent need for skill development among local youth and greater participation in private enterprise. Despite higher educational attainment, employability gaps persist, contributing to unemployment, migration, and delayed family formation.

Tourism continues to be a vital but fragile pillar



of Kashmir's economy. Recent setbacks have underscored the importance of diversification, resilience, and sustainable investment in allied sectors to protect livelihoods.

Encouragingly, the Government of Jammu and Kashmir has been focusing on infrastructure development, skill enhancement, tourism revival, and support for entrepreneurship. These initiatives provide a strong foundation. What is now equally required is a social shift towards moderation, productive investment, dignity of labour, and sustainable living, values

deeply rooted in Kashmiri tradition.

Kashmir's economic revival lies in rebuilding from within: strengthening skills, protecting agricultural land, promoting compact and sustainable housing, and aligning social practices with economic realities. With public cooperation and continued policy support, the region can move toward inclusive, balanced, and resilient growth.

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Where Is the Snow?



■ SAHIL MANZOOR BHATTI

Literally, during mid-January, every corner of Kashmir is painted white. Lofty mountains glow at night, waterfalls come to a halt as every drop freezes, and the scenery scatters mesmerizing views. Famous rivers such as the Lidder in Pahalgam, the Shaliganga in Doodhpathri, the Doodhganga in Brenwar, and the most prominent River Jhelum, which flows through the heart of Kashmir—Srinagar—slow down their rhythm and attract thousands of tourists.

Kashmir usually witnesses heavy snowfall from December to January. During this period, everything changes in the valley. Mountains, trees, roads, and rooftops are covered with a thick white layer of snow. The entire region looks calm, peaceful, and beautiful. However, this year, it is January and there is still no snow on the plains of Kashmir. This unusual situation has surprised both locals and visitors. People are asking the same question everywhere: Where is the snow?

Snow plays a very important role in the life and beauty of the Kashmir Valley. It enhances the natural charm of the region and gives it a magical look. Snow is whitish like milk, soft like a sponge, crispy to the touch, and extremely cold. There is no alternative to snow in Kashmir, nor does it have any artificial replacement. Snow is not just frozen water; it is deeply connected with the culture, environment, economy, and emotions of the people of Kashmir.

Snow is not limited to what it literally appears to be. Many natural phenomena are related to snowfall, including blizzards, light snow flurries, and cold waves that spread to every corner of the valley. Snow accumulates on the broad shoulders of lofty mountains and forms glaciers over time. These glaciers are the life-line of Kashmir. Famous tourist destinations such as the meadows of Pahalgam, Gulmarg, Doodhpathri, and Sonamarg are known for their breathtaking beauty during winter. When snow covers these meadows, they turn into vast white carpets that attract tourists from all over the world.



During harsh winters, almost every water body freezes. Lakes, ponds, streams, and even slow-moving rivers develop a thin layer of ice. The branches of large trees look as if they are bearing fruits made of snow. Roofs of houses shine under sunlight, and smoke rising from chimneys adds to the winter charm. The entire valley appears calm and silent, wrapped in a white blanket.

Winters are truly special in Kashmir. During this season, visitors from different parts of the world rush to the valley to capture beautiful memories using their mobile phones, Android devices, and DSLR cameras. Snow-covered landscapes, frozen lakes, and snowfall scenes attract photographers, vloggers, and nature lovers. Not only visitors from outside Kashmir, but local people also deeply love snowfall. Children eagerly wait for snow to fall so they can play, build snowmen, and enjoy snowball fights.

Snow has a great influence on Kashmir. It enhances the beauty of the valley and makes every corner look like a decorated bride. Nature dresses the lofty mountains, huge trees, and wide meadows in pure white attire. Lush green fields disappear under snow and reappear in spring with fresh life. Snow gives rest to the soil and prepares it for the coming agricultural season.

Snow defines winter in Kashmir

and holds great importance in many ways. The accumulation of snow on high mountains becomes the main source of drinking water for the entire valley. As temperatures rise, snow melts gradually and feeds rivers and streams. Glaciers provide clean and crystal-clear water to famous rivers such as the Lidder River in Pahalgam, the Shaliganga River in Doodhpathri, and the Doodhganga River in Yousmarg. These rivers support agriculture, hydroelectric projects, and daily household needs.

Snow also reflects the true beauty of nature. It makes every natural surrounding look fresh, peaceful, and pure. Winter landscapes feel calm and soothing, giving people a sense of closeness to nature. Many people believe that snowfall cleans the environment by settling dust and pollutants.

In Kashmir, winters officially begin with the arrival of the 40-day harsh period known as Chillai Kalaan. This period usually starts in late December and continues till the end of January. During Chillai Kalaan, temperatures drop to extreme levels, and heavy snowfall is expected. After this, winter slowly eases but continues until 20th March. On 21st March, the festival of Novruz is celebrated in the Kashmir Valley. This day marks the arrival of spring. Traditionally, people take cold water baths on this day, believing that winters have ended.

Winters are also special because of the delicious traditional food enjoyed by native people. Kashmiri families prepare warm and nutritious dishes to survive the cold weather. One of the most famous winter dishes is Harissa, made from meat and spices and eaten with kebabs and traditional Kashmiri bread known as kaandir tcho'ut. Other popular dishes include razma (kidney beans), fish preparations, radish dishes, dry fruits, and various meat-based foods. These foods provide warmth and energy during cold days and long nights.

However, the absence of snowfall this winter has raised serious concerns. Farmers are worried about water scarcity in summer. Orchard owners fear poor crop production. Tour operators are facing losses due to fewer tourists. Climate change, global warming, and changing weather patterns are often blamed for this unusual situation.

Snow is not just a season in Kashmir; it is an emotion. It defines life, culture, and survival in the valley. Without snow, winters feel incomplete. The question "Where is the snow?" reflects not only concern but also longing. People hope that snowfall will return soon and restore the natural balance and beauty of Kashmir.

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NATIONAL YOUTH DAY

The Responsibility of Youth in Building a Strong and Progressive India



■ SHOIAB MOHMMAD BHAT

National Youth Day is celebrated every year on 12th January in India to mark the birth anniversary of Swami Vivekananda, one of the greatest thinkers, philosophers, and spiritual leaders that the nation has produced. It is a day to recognise the energy, enthusiasm, creativity, and massive potential that the youth possess, along with reminding them of their vital role in shaping the nation's future. Swami Vivekananda strongly believed that the future of India depends on the vitality, character and dedication to the ideals of service and unity.

In 1984, the Government of India declared Swami Vivekananda's birth anniversary as National Youth Day, which has been celebrated every year since 1985. The need to observe National Youth Day lies in remembering a great personality and cultivating bravery, discipline, self-confidence, fearlessness, and a spirit of selfless service among the youth. It also reminds us that the power of youth, when channelled in the right direction, can bring about revolutionary change in the nation.

The position that India enjoys today in the international arena is unique due to its youth bulge. More than 50% of the Indian population is below 30 years of age; this is one of the youngest nations in the world, World Vision India states. Meanwhile, this youth bulge poses both an advantage and a disadvantage to the nation. Indeed, the country reaps vast benefits in the sectors of education, innovation, business, technology, and leadership.

The role of youth in nation-building begins with education and holistic development. Education equips young people with knowledge, skills, and awareness, enabling them to contribute meaning-



fully to society. According to Swami Vivekananda, education should extend beyond textbooks and examinations to focus on building character, confidence, and compassion. This approach ensures that individuals grow into competent professionals as well as morally upright and responsible members of society.

The youth also play a crucial role in economic development and innovation. Young Indians are shaping a progressive economy through advancement in entrepreneurship and start-ups, research and science, technology and innovation, sports, and creative industries. Currently, many young people in the country are becoming job creators rather than job seekers, thereby contributing to the vision of a self-reliant India.

The youth of India have also brought glory to the nation for their accomplishments in sports. Whether it is international sports personalities or new talent discovered from distant areas, youngsters show that with hard work, talent, and determination, nothing is impossible. There is one such example from Kashmir named Owais Yaqoob, a Mixed Martial Arts fight-

er, who has overcome all limitations to strive for excellence. It is inspiring for youngsters that he could achieve all this through hard work and determination.

Another successful example from Kashmir that inspires and motivates is Aqib Nabi, whose journey from the grassroots of Baramulla cricket fields to the biggest stage of the Indian Premier League makes it a momentous day in the history of Jammu and Kashmir. Getting quoted at such a staggering price of 8.40 crores in the Delhi Capitals, Aqib broke many long-held patterns of exposure and opportunity for cricketers from this zone. Aqib's story also translates into the successful conversion of talent into recognition with his perseverance and consistency in domestic and Ranji matches.

Kashmir has also made its mark in football, with Tajamul Islam, an international football player from Sopore, representing India in different international events. His journey reflects the growing football culture in Kashmir and highlights the immense potential of Kashmiri youth. Representing the nation on international platforms is a matter of great pride, both

for individual athletes and also for their city and Kashmir as a whole.

Despite the hardships, Kashmir has witnessed many motivating youth success stories. Players such as Sofiya Hilal, a Wushu champion hailing from Sopore, and Owais Yaqoob, Aqib Nabi, and Tajamul Islam have proven that challenges can never dampen anyone's ambitions. These achievers embody the determination, courage, and optimism of Kashmir's youth, inspiring others across the country to attain excellence through diligence, dedication, and self-confidence.

Sports and entrepreneurship aside, Indian youth have been making a difference in society in other ways. It has been observed that many young members of society have been working towards social causes like social welfare, education, healthcare, conservation of nature, and women's empowerment, and this makes them represent the actual fabric of nation-building in every sense of the term.

Another responsibility of youth encompasses the promotion of social harmony and unity in the country. India's strength lies in its religious, linguistic, cultural, and

traditional diversification. Youth should be symbols of peace, tolerance, and understanding among each other. By rejecting discrimination, violence, and hatred, they can help preserve the unity and integrity of the nation.

Youth involvement and engagement in a democratic society is another vital responsibility. They must participate actively in the political process through responsible voting, staying informed about national issues, constructive debate, and contributing to the development of their communities. A healthy democracy also requires citizens who respect truth, accountability, and transparency.

One of the most pressing concerns for today's generation is environmental protection. Global warming, pollution, deforestation, and the depletion of natural resources have become major threats to mankind. It is up to this generation of young people to lead the way towards sustainable development and environmentally conscious living.

National Youth Day reminds us that nation-building is not the sole responsibility of the government, it is a collective duty of the entire nation, with the youth leading the process. Swami Vivekananda's words, "Arise, awake, and stop not till the goal is reached", continue to inspire the youth of India to rise above fear, doubt, and limitations.

National Youth Day can be seen as a celebration and a call to action. Youth in large numbers are India's biggest strength. When this strength of youth in India is coupled with education, values, discipline, and responsibility, it can bring a complete transformation in India itself. Stories of success from all over the country, as well as examples of success in places as distant as Kashmir, in Owais Yaqoob, Aqib Nabi, Sofiya Hilal, and Tajamul Islam, prove that the youth are capable of achieving anything and building a bright future for themselves. Empowered, responsible, and values-based young people are the face of India's future, the strength of the nation in the present and the actual architects of its success in the years and decades to come.

shoaibhat2018@gmail.com

There is Always Magic In A Smile



■ M S NAZKI

There is always magic in a smile! My Mom told me this!

I love those who can smile in trouble said Leonardo da Vinci but I'm not a painting expert!

If you smile when you are alone, then you really mean it.....I do realize it now! But writing is all about smiles!

A laugh is a smile out of control....Mind you everyone forgets this!

You shouldn't never regret something that made you smile.....

I just want to make people smile and live and told them look back, and smile on perils past.....!

Smile story" can refer to motivational tales about spreading joy (like the Zen master story or the fawn who learns to laugh), real patient experiences transforming dental issues into confidence (dental clinic "Smile Stories"), or the horror movie franchise Smile, where a supernatural entity causes victims to smile before their death. The common thread is transformation, whether it's through kindness, dental treatment, or facing darkness, all centered around the powerful expression of a smile.

Inspirational/Moral Tales:

The Zen Master: A traveler asks a Zen master about a new town, and the master replies that whatever you put out into the world is what you'll get back, emphasizing kindness.

The Fawn's Laughter: A crying fawn is comforted, and when its mother suggests beating the boulder that tripped it, the fawn refuses, fearing the boulder would cry, leading to laughter.

While many generals have surely smiled in private

or in victory, few have been specifically noted in historical records for maintaining a cheerful demeanor during the actual stress and intensity of fighting. The closest historical figures known for a consistent, notable smile or positive disposition during wartime command were often referred to by specific nicknames:

Field Marshal Albert Kesselring The German Luftwaffe (Air Force) general who later commanded ground forces during World War II was known by the derisive Allied nickname "Smiling Albert" (or "Uncle Albert" by his own troops). This nickname referred to his perceived optimism and genial demeanor despite challenging military situations and the severe nature of the conflict in the Mediterranean and Italian campaigns.

Field Marshal Sir Gerald Templer A British Army officer, Templer was the Director of Operations during the Malayan Emergency. He was referred to as "the smiling tiger" by Timde magazine for combining vigorous military action with a "hearts and minds" political strategy.

General Suharto The long-serving Indonesian military leader and president was often characterized as "The Smiling General" (Pak Harto) in the international press. The nickname referred to his public persona and seemingly inscrutable nature behind a perpetual smile, though he was known for being a ruthless and authoritarian leader who came to power through a violent anti-communist purge.

Lieutenant General Zorawar Chand Bakshi A highly decorated Indian Army general, known as "Zoru," was described by a fellow officer as a very shy man with an "impish smile and infectious laughter" when not in uniform. He was known for his extreme valor and for fighting in all of India's wars after independence.

These examples typically refer to a general's overall disposition or public persona rather than a specific documented act of smiling during a battle. The nature of historical documentation means direct records of emotional expressions during peak combat are rare.

I just want to make people smile. Look back, and smile on perils past. Remember to smile. Beauty is power; a smile is its sword.....Lt General Pratik Sharma GOC in C Army Commander Northern Army !

Albert Kesselring (30 November 1885 – 16 July 1960) was a German military officer who served in the Luftwaffe during World War II. In a career which spanned both world wars, Kesselring eventually reached the rank of the General feldmarschall (Field marshal) and became one of Nazi Germany's most highly decorated commanders. Following the war, he was convicted of war crimes and imprisoned until his release in 1952.

Kesselring joined the Bavarian Army as an officer cadet in 1904, serving in the artillery branch. He completed training as a balloon observer in 1912. During World War I, he served on both the Western and Eastern fronts and was posted to the Army Staff, despite not having attended the War Academy. Kesselring served in the Reichswehr after the war, but was discharged in 1933 to become head of the Department of Administration at the Ministry of Aviation, where he became involved in the re-establishment of the German aviation industry and the laying of the foundations for the Luftwaffe, serving as its chief of staff from 1936 to 1938.

During World War II, he commanded Luftwaffe forces in the German invasions of Poland and France, the Battle of Britain and the invasion of the Soviet Union. As Wehrmacht Commander-in-Chief South, he was the overall German commander in the Mediterranean theatre, which included the North African campaign. Kesselring conducted a defensive campaign against Allied forces in Italy, being involved in ordering several massacres, until he was injured in an accident in October 1944. In his final campaign of the war, he commanded German forces on the Western Front. During the war, he won the respect of his Allied opponents for his military accomplishments.

Gerald Templer: The smiling tiger

Field Marshal Sir Gerald Templer commanded infantry and armoured divisions, as well as the German Directorate of the Special Operations Executive, during the Second World War. He went on to lead British forces during the Malayan Emergency, one of the few successful counter-insurgency operations undertaken by the Western powers during the Cold War.

Gerald Templer (1898-1979) joined the British Army in 1916. He served on the Western Front with the

Royal Irish Fusiliers during the later stages of the First World War. In the inter-war period, he served in Palestine during the Arab insurgency, and also found time to make the 1924 Olympic squad as a 120-yard hurdler.

Second World War: In 1940, Templer went to France as an intelligence officer on the staff of the British Expeditionary Force. After the Dunkirk evacuation, he oversaw the raising of the 9th Battalion of the Royal Sussex Regiment. He then commanded a brigade in a Home Service division.

In 1942, Templer was given command of the 47th Division as a major-general. Shortly after, he commanded II Corps as the Army's youngest lieutenant-general.

In 1943-44, Templer commanded the 56th Division in Italy, which saw severe fighting in operations around Anzio. He briefly commanded the 6th Armoured Division before being wounded by a land mine in mid-1944.

He spent the rest of the war on intelligence duties with 21st Army Group HQ as well as heading the German Directorate of the Special Operations Executive.

After the war, he served as Director of Military Government in occupied Germany before being appointed Director of Military Intelligence at the War Office in 1946.

Hearts and minds

Templer combined vigorous military operations against the insurgents' jungle bases with political reforms designed to win the 'hearts and minds' of the racially divided Malayan community. Indeed, Templer is credited with coining this phrase.

He continued his predecessors' policy of building new settlements for the marginalised Chinese population and promised independence once the guerrillas had been defeated. This won him the support of many nationalists.

Lieutenant General Dwight D. Eisenhower, who was known by the nickname "The Smile" due to his pleasant and friendly attitude. He had a daughter named Anne, who died of scarlet fever at age three, and the general had one surviving son, John Eisenhower.

While there isn't a widely publicized account of his daughter specifically writing about his smile, the nickname itself highlights this prominent trait.

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The Cultural Pollution



■ DR. SURINDERPAL SINGH

In the contemporary world, every individual is inevitably shaped by the forces of globalization and the growing dominance of materialism. While globalization has enabled unprecedented connectivity, access to information, and economic opportunities, it has also introduced complex challenges that threaten the very foundations of cultural identity. One of the most pressing and often overlooked challenges is cultural pollution. Cultural pollution refers to the gradual erosion, distortion, or complete disappearance of indigenous cultures, traditions, languages, and values under the influence of dominant global cultures, particularly Western consumerism. As societies increasingly adopt foreign customs, lifestyles, and value systems, the consequences for local cultures become profound, far-reaching, and, in many cases, irreversible.

Culture is not merely a collection of rituals, songs, or clothing styles; it is the collective memory of a society, shaping its worldview, moral values, social relationships, and sense of belonging. When cultural pollution sets in, it weakens this collective memory, leaving communities detached from their roots and disconnected from their historical identity. The homogenization of cultures across the globe has resulted in cities, lifestyles, and even human aspirations beginning to look strikingly similar, regardless of geographical location. This growing uniformity raises serious concerns about the survival of cultural diversity, which has long been one of humanity's greatest strengths.

Understanding cultural pollution requires recognizing its subtle and gradual nature. Unlike environmental pollution, which is often visible and measurable, cultural pollution seeps into societies quietly through everyday practices, consumer choices, and media consumption. It manifests in numerous forms, including the commercialization of traditional practices, the dilution of indigenous languages, and the marginalization of local art forms. Traditional cuisines are increasingly replaced by fast food chains, local music struggles to compete with globally marketed pop culture, and traditional attire is worn only on ceremonial occasions while Western fashion dominates daily life. Over time, these changes normalize the idea that local culture is outdated, inferior, or irrelevant in a modern world.

One of the most visible expressions of cultural pollution is the transformation of traditional practices into commodities. Rituals, festivals, and customs that once carried deep spiritual or social meaning are often repackaged to suit commercial interests or global audiences. In the process, their original significance is lost. What was once a sacred tradition becomes a performance, stripped of its context and reduced to visual appeal. This phenomenon is particularly evident in regions heavily dependent on tourism, where cultural expressions are modified to meet the expectations of visitors rather than reflect authentic heritage.

The role of media and technology in accelerating cultural pollution cannot be overstated. The rapid expansion of digital platforms has revolutionized communication, allowing cultures to interact and influence one another at an unprecedented scale. While this cultural exchange can foster understanding and appreciation, it has also created an imbalance in which dominant cultures overshadow marginalized ones. Social media platforms, streaming services, and digital entertainment industries largely promote lifestyles rooted in Western ideals, emphasizing consumerism, individualism, and material success. As a result, young people in non-Western societies are increasingly exposed to narratives that portray Western culture as modern, aspirational, and superior.

Influencers, celebrities, and global icons play a crucial role in shaping cultural aspirations. Through curated online personas, they promote fashion trends, music genres, beauty standards, and lifestyles that often have little connection to local traditions. This constant exposure influences young minds, encouraging them to imitate foreign cultural practices while distancing themselves from their own heritage. In many societies, speaking indigenous languages, wearing traditional clothing, or practicing local customs is increasingly seen as old-fashioned or socially undesirable, especially among urban youth.

Music provides a compelling example of how cultural pollution affects artistic expression. The global popularity of Western music genres such as pop, hip-hop, and electronic dance music has pushed indigenous musical forms to the margins. Traditional musicians often struggle to gain recognition, financial support, or performance opportunities as audiences gravitate toward globally marketed artists. This shift not only threatens the livelihoods of traditional artists but also endangers the continuity of musical traditions that have been passed down through generations. When younger generations lose interest in learning traditional instruments or musical styles, an entire cultural legacy risks being lost.

The economic dimensions of cul-



tural pollution further complicate the issue. Cultural erosion is not only a loss of identity but also a loss of economic opportunity for local communities. Artisans, craftsmen, weavers, and folk artists often find it difficult to compete in markets flooded with mass-produced goods that are cheaper and more accessible. Traditional crafts that once thrived within local economies now stand on the brink of extinction as consumer preferences shift toward standardized, factory-made products. These alternatives may be affordable, but they lack the cultural depth, craftsmanship, and historical significance embedded in traditional creations.

Global trade and consumer culture have encouraged a mindset that prioritizes convenience and cost over authenticity and heritage. In the twenty-first century, consumers often choose products based on brand recognition rather than cultural value. This shift undermines local industries that rely on traditional knowledge and skills. As demand for indigenous crafts declines, younger generations are discouraged from learning these skills, leading to a break in the transmission of cultural knowledge from one generation to the next.

Tourism, while often promoted as a means of cultural exchange and economic development, can paradoxically intensify cultural pollution. In many tourist destinations, cultural heritage is

transformed into a spectacle designed to entertain rather than educate. Traditional dances, rituals, and festivals are shortened, simplified, or altered to appeal to foreign tastes. While this approach may generate revenue, it often results in a superficial portrayal of culture, depriving both locals and visitors of a genuine understanding of its depth and meaning. Over time, communities may begin to view their own culture through the lens of external validation, further eroding its authenticity.

Despite the challenges posed by cultural pollution, resistance and preservation efforts are gaining momentum across the world. Grassroots movements, community-based organizations, and cultural activists are working tirelessly to protect and revive indigenous traditions. These efforts include promoting local languages, supporting traditional arts and crafts, and organizing cultural festivals that celebrate authentic practices rather than commercialized versions. Such initiatives play a vital role in restoring pride in cultural identity and encouraging communities to reconnect with their roots.

Education emerges as one of the most powerful tools in combating cultural pollution. By integrating local history, folklore, and traditions into school curricula, educational institutions can foster a sense of cultural awareness and pride among students. When young

people understand the significance of their heritage, they are more likely to value and preserve it. Education also helps counter the notion that modernity and tradition are incompatible, demonstrating that cultural identity can coexist with progress and innovation.

Government intervention is equally important in safeguarding cultural heritage. In several countries, policies have been implemented to protect indigenous languages, promote traditional arts, and regulate cultural industries. The concept of Gross National Happiness, for instance, emphasizes the importance of cultural preservation alongside economic development, recognizing that true progress cannot be measured by material wealth alone. Such approaches highlight the need for development models that respect cultural diversity and prioritize human well-being over unchecked consumerism.

Individuals also play a crucial role in addressing cultural pollution through conscious choices and everyday actions. Supporting local artisans, participating in cultural events, and choosing products that reflect cultural authenticity can collectively make a significant impact. When consumers recognize the value of traditional knowledge and craftsmanship, they contribute to the sustainability of cultural practices. Advocacy for policies that protect cultural heritage further strengthens these efforts, creating an environment in which cultural diversity can flourish.

Globalization is neither inherently good nor bad; it is a powerful force that can bring opportunities for growth, understanding, and collaboration. However, when left unchecked, it can also erode cultural identities and create a homogenized world devoid of diversity. Cultural pollution is a serious issue that demands attention and action from individuals, communities, and governments alike. Preserving culture is not about resisting change or rejecting global influences but about maintaining balance and ensuring that progress does not come at the cost of identity.

By valuing cultural diversity and actively working to protect it, societies can create a richer and more vibrant global landscape. Cultural heritage connects people to their past, gives meaning to the present, and provides guidance for the future. In a world increasingly driven by materialism and uniformity, preserving cultural identity becomes an act of resistance, resilience, and hope. If meaningful steps are taken today, future generations will inherit a world that celebrates diversity, honors tradition, and embraces progress without losing its soul.

The author is a Faculty, Science Department Sri Amritsar Sahib Punjab

India faces second highest economic burden due to diabetes, study shows

■ HEALTHLINE

India faces a massive economic burden from diabetes, estimated at over 11 trillion US dollars. This figure places India second globally, behind the United States. The study highlights that informal caregiving significantly increases these costs. Experts emphasize that promoting healthy lifestyles and early detection are crucial to combat this growing health and economic challenge.

India faces the second highest economic burden due to diabetes of USD 11.4 trillion -- the United States bears the highest costs at USD 16.5 trillion, and China the third at USD 11 trillion, a new study has estimated.

Researchers, including those from the International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis and the Vienna University of Economics and Business in Austria, calculated the economic impact of diabetes across 204 countries from 2020 to 2050.

Global costs amount to around USD 10 trillion, excluding informal care provided by family members -- about 0.2 per cent of the world's annual gross domestic product (GDP), findings published in the journal Nature Medicine show.

Factoring in informal care amounts to up to USD 152 trillion, or 1.7 per cent of the world's yearly GDP, the study estimates.



"Caregivers often drop out of the labour market, at least partially, which creates additional economic costs," author Klaus Prettnner, professor of macroeconomics and digitalisation at the Vienna University of Economics and Business, said.

The high share of informal caregiving, making up almost 90 per cent of

the total economic burden, is explained by the fact that prevalence exceeds mortality by a factor of 30-50, the researchers said.

"The United States faces the largest economic burden of diabetes mellitus at INT\$ 2.5 trillion, followed by India at INT\$ 1.6 trillion and China at INT\$ 1.0 trillion. When considering

informal care loss, the largest economic burdens are INT\$ 16.5 trillion in the United States, INT\$ 11.4 trillion in India and INT\$ 11.0 trillion in China," the authors wrote.

An international dollar (INT\$) is a hypothetical, statistical unit used to compare economic metrics across countries. It has the same purchasing

power as a United States dollar (USD).

For India and China, the high economic costs of diabetes were mainly attributed to a large affected population, while those in the US were primarily due to high treatment costs and physical capital diversion, the researchers said.

They added that a prime distinc-

tion between high- and low-income countries is the distribution of the burden across the treatment cost and lost labour channels -- the former makes up 41 per cent of the economic burden for high-income countries as opposed to 14 per cent for low-income countries.

"This is a stark illustration of how medical treatment regimes for chronic diseases such as diabetes are accessible to high income countries only," co-author Michael Kuhn, acting economic frontiers research group leader at the International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis, said.

The economic impact of diabetes is enormous, compared to that due to Alzheimer's disease or cancer, the researchers said.

Promoting healthier lifestyles -- regular physical activity and a balanced diet -- is the most effective way to prevent diabetes and reduce its economic impact, they said.

Early detection through comprehensive diabetes screening programs for the entire population, along with rapid diagnosis and timely treatment, are essential steps toward mitigating both health and economic consequences, the team said.

Over a quarter of the world's diabetics are estimated to be living in India, according to a study published in The Lancet journal in November 2024.

SKUAST-K Empowers Youth and SHGs through One-Day Entrepreneurship Awareness Programme

HT NEWS NETWORK

BARAMULLA, JAN 12: The Division of Agriculture Extension & Communication, Faculty of Agriculture Wadura, Sher-e-Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences & Technology of Kashmir (SKUAST-K) organized a one-day Entrepreneurship Awareness Programme under the MSME at Village Zaloora, Baramulla, on the theme "Harnessing the Potential of Self Help Groups (SHGs) and Youth for Sustainable Entrepreneurship."

The programme aimed at sensitizing Self Help Groups, women, artisans, and youth about entrepreneurship opportunities, skill development, and institutional support for sustainable livelihood generation. The programme witnessed enthusiastic participation from members of women Self Help Groups, young aspirants, artisans, and other stakeholders. The primary objective of the programme was to promote self-employment, encourage entrepreneurial thinking, and strengthen the economic capacities of SHGs and youth through awareness, capacity building, and exposure to various support schemes.

Addressing the gathering, Mr. Mohd Yousuf, Assistant Director Handicrafts, Baramulla, highlighted the role of traditional handicrafts in sustainable entrepreneurship. He elaborated on various government schemes related to Aari, Kaam, and tailoring, which are specifically designed to benefit women Self Help Groups. Dr. Hilal Ahmad,

Assistant Handicrafts Training Officer, Kupwara, delivered an enlightening lecture and informed participants about training facilities, financial assistance, and marketing support provided by the Handicrafts Department. He further emphasized that these schemes not only help in preserving traditional art forms but also generate employment opportunities for women.

Mr. Athar Bashir and Ms. Gazala Hassan, officers from Jammu & Kashmir Bank, Wadura, delivered detailed lectures on banking schemes and financial assistance available for artisans, SHGs, and budding entrepreneurs. They explained the procedures for availing loans, subsidies, and credit-linked schemes from banks and encouraged SHG members to approach banks confidently with viable project proposals, assuring them of full cooperation and support.

Speaking on the importance of collective efforts, Dr. Syed Shafat Kubrei emphasized the significance of Self Help Groups in socio-economic development. He stated that SHGs play a vital role in improving livelihoods, promoting savings, and strengthening social unity among members.

The programme was coordinated by Dr. Quadir Javeed Ahmad Peer, who enlightened participants about the concept, scope, and relevance of entrepreneurship for SHGs and youth. He stressed that entrepreneurship is a powerful tool for sustainable development when supported by proper skill development, innova-

tion, value addition, and market linkage. He encouraged participants to utilize locally available resources and traditional skills in a modern and market-oriented manner.

The programme featured interactive sessions where participants raised queries

regarding government schemes, banking procedures, and challenges faced in starting entrepreneurial ventures. The resource persons addressed these queries and provided practical guidance, making the programme informative and engaging.

Government Of Jammu & Kashmir Office of the Naib Tehsildar, Achabal

PUBLIC NOTICE

Subject: Application of Faizan Ahmad Shah, S/o Nazir Ahmad Shah, R/o Kawarigam, Tehsil Achabal, District Anantnag for issuance of RBA / OBC Certificate.

Whereas the above-named applicant has applied in this office for issuance of RBA / OBC Certificate in his favour. In this connection, report from the concerned Patwari Halqa has been obtained, which reveals that the applicant is a resident of village Kawarigam, Tehsil Achabal, District Anantnag.

The annual income of the family as per records is within the prescribed limits and the family details stand verified.

Now, therefore, any person having any objection with regard to the issuance of the said certificate in favour of the applicant may present his/her objection along with documentary proof in this office within 07 (seven) days from the date of publication of this notice. After the expiry of the stipulated period, no objection shall be entertained.

Issued under my hand and seal of this office.

By Order
Naib Tehsildar, Achabal

Public Notice

My name wrongly mentioned in my driving licence under licence number JK05 200400, 14625 as Gh Mohammad Lone instead of Ghulam Mohammad lone. Now I am applying for its correction if anybody have any objection in this regard He/She may contact ARTO Baramulla within seven days from the publication of this notice after that no objection will be entertained.

GHULAM MOHAMMAD LONE S/O MOHAMMAD SULTAN LONE R/O NOWPORA JAGIR BARAMULLLA

Public Notice

I have lost my provisional cum character certificate at somewhere bearing registration No N17441720060 .Now i am applying for its duplicate certificate if anybody having any objection in this regard he/she may file his/her objection in the office of JKBOSE srinagar / Govt Higher Secondary School KREERI. within seven days from the publication of this notice after that no objection will be entertained.

**Name...ARBEENA TARIQ
D/O ...TARIQ AHMAD MIR
Session.....Annual Regular 2020
R/O ...SALOOSA
District..... Baramulla**

Public Notice

This is for information of general public that the (Electric bill) power connection is registered on my Fathers name Late BASHIR AHMAD MIR S/O AB AHAD MIR R/O DOLIPORA WAGOORA .Now this Connection bearing Consumer ID NO 0212040011000 wants to be registered on my JAVID AHMAD MIR S/O BASHIR AHMAD MIR R/O DOLIPORA WAGOORA If anybody have any objection in this regard He/She may file his/her objection in the concerned PDD office within seven days from the date of publication of this notice after that no objection will be entertained.

**Name.....JAVID AHMAD MIR
S/O ... BASHIR AHMAD MIR
R/O ...DOLIPORA**

Government Of Jammu & Kashmir Office Of The Tehsildar Kreeri

Subject: Application for issuance of OBC certificate applicant MEHRAJ GANI MIR & RASHID GANI MIR S/O ABDUL GANI MIR R/O KAKOTHAL Tehsil KREERI in favour of self for the issuance of OBC (Other Backward class in his /her / their favor

PUBLIC NOTICE

Regarding the subject cited above the file in the office of the undersigned for the issuance of OBC in this connection a report of patwari halqa concerned has been sought which reveals that the applicant is currently residing in the village of KAKOTHAL KREERI of Tehsil KREERI and belongs to the MIR community having annual income 696560 // the details of family of the applicant are as follows

- 1...ABDUL GANI MIR Father 65 years RETIRE EMPLOYEE
- 2..TASLEEMA BEGUM Mother 55 years House wife
- 3..YASMERNA GANI sister 25 years Student
- 4.. RASHID GANI MIR self Brother 20 years student
- 5..MEHRAJ GANI MIR Brother 20 years student

If anyone have any objection to the issuance of delay order of said certificate shall present his/her claim this office within 07 days, after that no objection shall be entertained.

Naib Tehsild Kreeri

Public Notice

My daughters Mothers Aadhar No has been wrongly written as 7298 6522 9014 in her Date of Birth certificate issued by Block Development Officer WAGOORA while her correct Mother's Aadhar No is 7298 6522 9041 which needs to be corrected if anybody having any objection in this regard he/she may file his/her objection in the office of BDO office WAGOORA within seven days from the publication of this notice after that no objection will be entertained.

**Name..GH MOHI UD DIN THOKAR
S/O ... MOHD RAMZAN THOKAR
R/O ...KALANTRA BALA**

Government Of Jammu & Kashmir Office Of The Tehsildar Kreeri

Subject: Application of. AB AHAD LONE S/O AB REHIM LONE R/O THINDIMA for the issuance of LEGAL HEIR certificate

PUBLIC NOTICE

Regarding the subject cited above in this context a report sought from patwari halqa concerned and the Death certificate issued by the competent authority reveals that AB REHIM LONE S /O AB AHAD LONE has passed away on 01/12/2025 .The report of the patwari further depicts that the deceased has left behind following dependent as tabulated below

- 1... , AB AHAD LONE SON ,48 Labour married
 - 2.... SHAFIQA BANO daughter 52 years H/W widow
 - 3...SHAHEENA BEGUM dauhter 45 years H/W married
 4. SHAKEELA BANO daughter 40 years H/W married
 - 5...HAJRA BEGUM daughter 49 H/W married
 - 6....RUBEENA LONE daughter 38 years H/W married
- The applicant has applied for Issuance of Legal heir certificate in favour of Self.

If anyone have any objection to the issuance of delay order of said certificate shall present his/her claim this office within 07 days, after that no objection shall be entertained.

Naib Tehsild Kreeri

Public Notice

This is for information of general public that the (Electric bill) power connection is registered on my GRAND Fathers name Late FATAH THOKAR S/O MOHD RAMZAN THOKAR R/O KALANTRA BALA .Now this Connection bearing Consumer ID NO 0212040002550 wants to be registered on my GH MOHI UD DIN THOKER S/O MOHD RAMZAN THOKAR R/O KALANTRA BALA .If anybody have any objection in this regard He/She may file his/her objection in the concerned PDD office within seven days from the date of publication of this notice after that no objection will be entertained.

**Name..GH MOHI UD DIN THOKAR
S/O ... MOHD RAMZAN THOKAR
R/O ...KALANTRA BALA**

Government Of Jammu & Kashmir Office Of The Tehsildar Kreeri

Subject: Application ISHRAT SULTAN , ASMAT SULTAN & JABEENA SULTAN D/O MOHD SULTAN BHAT R/O SHEIKHPORA for issuance of RBA certificate in favour of self Tehsil KREERI for the issuance of RBA in his /her / their favor

PUBLIC NOTICE

Regarding the subject cited above the file in the office of the undersigned for the issuance of RBA in this connection a report of patwari halqa concerned has been sought which reveals that the applicant is currently residing in the village of SHEIKHPORA of Tehsil KREERI and belongs to the BHAT community having annual income 544000 // the details of family of the applicant are as follows

- 1..MOHD SULTAN BHAT Father 50 years Labour
- 2.NASEEMA BAGUM Mother 47 years H/W
- 3... JABEENA SULTAN applicant 27 years student
- 4..ISHRAT SULTAN applicant 25 years student
- 5....WASEEM AHMAD BHAT Brother 22 years student
- 6....ASMAT SULTAN Applicant 21 years student

If anyone have any objection to the issuance of delay order of said certificate shall present his/her claim this office within 07 days, after that no objection shall be entertained.

Naib Tehsild Kreeri

Office of the Principal Govt. Polytechnic College Ganderbal

Hatbura, Ganderbal Kashmir, J&K | Pin: 191131 | Ph: 9419538529
Email: Govtpoly-ganderbal@jk.gov.in | Website: www.govtpolytechnicganderbal.org.in

ADVERTISEMENT NOTICE

Applications are invited from the eligible desirous candidates for engagement as Guest Faculty in Govt. Polytechnic College Ganderbal, for the session May-June 2026 purely on temporary basis in the following courses.

S.No.	Course/ Subject	Minimum Qualification
01	Electrical Engineering	B.E/B. Tech in Electrical Engineering from a recognized University/Institute
02	Civil Engineering	B.E/B. Tech in Civil Engineering from a recognized University/Institute
03	Computer Engineering	B.E/B. Tech in Computer Engineering from a recognized University/Institute

REMUNERATION: The Guest Lecturer shall be paid remuneration @Rs. 750 per lecture to the condition that monthly remuneration shall not exceed Rs 20,000/-.

SELECTION CRITERIA: On the date of interaction/Demo class, which shall be communicated to the shortlisted candidates through email, the candidates must come along with all their original certificates, updated C.V and relevant experience certificates. Appearing in Interaction is must and candidates who fail to attend the interaction session shall not be considered for further selection. Selection Criteria in terms of norms prescribed by Directorate order No. 37 of 2023 dated 24/01/2023 shall be followed as under:

1. **80 points for basic qualification.**
2. **05 points for higher qualification.**
3. **05 points for GATE/NET/SET.**
4. **05 points for teaching experience (Polytechnic Diploma level or higher) on pro rata basis, 01 point for each academic year.**
5. **05 points for interview/Demo class.**

OTHER T&C:

1. The Last Date for submission of Application forms is 03-02-2026, 04:00 PM.
2. The Engagement shall be purely on Guest faculty norms and shall be for only 01 academic session.
3. Selected candidates shall submit undertaking /affidavit duly authenticated by First Class Magistrate before joining wherein clearly the conditions are stipulated that he/she shall not claim for continuation of his/her services and the agreement can be terminated at any point of time without any notice period.
4. Hardcopy of the application form along with self-attested copies of the Domicile certificate, qualification certificate, experience (if any) is to be submitted to the Principal office Govt. Polytechnic College Ganderbal by or before 03/02/2026. (Copy Enclosed).
5. Shortlisting of candidates for the interview will be done in 1:5 ratio.

APPLICATION FORM

1. Post applied for: _____
2. Name of applicant: _____
3. Parentage: _____
4. Sex: _____ Male _____ Female _____
5. Permanent Address: _____
6. Current Address: _____
7. Contact No: _____
8. Email ID: _____
9. Date of Birth: _____
10. Academic and Technical Qualification: _____

Photo

Exam	Year of Passing	Board / University	Total Marks	Marks Obtained	Percentage of Marks	Remarks

11. Experience (if any):

Post Held	Organisation (Govt/Pvt)	Period from	To

Declaration:

I. _____ S/O, D/O, W/O, _____ R/O _____ Tehsil _____
District _____ R/O

do hereby affirm that the entries made herein above in the application form are true and correct and nothing has been concealed therein.

Date:
Place:

Signature of Applicant

No: GPCG/Estt/2026/902-903 | Dated: 12/01/2026

DIPK: 9976/25 | Dated: 12-01-2026

**Sd/- Principal
Govt. Polytechnic College Ganderbal**

محمد رمضان میر

ارن بانڈی پورہ کا چہارم آج

محمد رمضان میر، میر پورہ ارن بانڈی پورہ بروز جمعہ کو انتقال کر گئے۔ مرحوم کے انتقال پر سیاسی، سماجی اور دیگر شخصیات نے دکھ اور افسوس کا اظہار کیا اور مرحوم کے انتقال کے ساتھ تعزیت اور تجنیتی ظاہر کی۔ محمد رمضان میر مرحوم کا چہارم آج 13 جولائی کو انجام دیا جا رہا ہے جس دوران مرحوم کے دولت خانہ پر دن بھر تعزیت نکلس منعقد ہو رہی ہے اور مرحوم کے حق میں دعائے مغفرت اور فاتحہ خوانی کی تقاریب بھی ہوں گی۔

Government Of Jammu & Kashmir Office of the Naib Tehsildar, Achabal

PUBLIC NOTICE

Subject: Application of the following applicants for issuance of RBA / OBC Certificate:

Zahid Nazir Baba, S/o Nazir Ahmad Baba
Mohammad Sayeem Baba, S/o Nazir Ahmad Baba
Shafkat Nazir Baba, S/o Nazir Ahmad Baba
All residents of Village Kawarigam, Tehsil Anantnag, District Anantnag.

Whereas the above-named applicants have applied in this office for issuance of RBA / OBC Certificate in their favour. In this connection, report from the concerned Patwari Halqa has been obtained, which reveals that the applicants are permanent residents of village Kawarigam, Tehsil Anantnag, District Anantnag.

The annual income of the families as per records is within the prescribed limits and the family particulars stand verified as per revenue records.

Now, therefore, any person having any objection with regard to the issuance of the said certificate(s) in favour of the applicants may present his/her objection along with documentary proof in this office within 07 (seven) days from the date of publication of this notice. After expiry of the stipulated period, no objection shall be entertained.

Issued under my hand and seal of this office.

By Order
Naib Tehsildar, Achabal

Speaker LA reviews progress on new LA Complex, allied development works

Emphasizes timely completion, adherence to quality parameters

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU, JANUARY 12: Speaker, Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly, Abdul Rahim Rather, today convened a meeting with senior officers to review the issues pertaining to construction of new Legislature Complex at Jammu, repair/renovation works in both MLA Hostels, arrangement for NeVa Seva Kendra for MLAs in Legislative Assembly and other ongoing development works to have a first-hand appraisal of the pace and quality of works.

The Speaker also reviewed other development works. These included replacement of digital sound system in the Assembly Hall at Jammu, installation of lift in the additional block of MLA hostel Jammu and two lifts in MLA hostel Srinagar besides repair works related to electric and civil works.

Chief Secretary Atal Dulloo, Additional Chief Secretary PWD



(R&B) Anil Singh, Secretary Law, Justice & Parliamentary Affairs Achal Sethi, Secretary JKLA Manoj Kumar Pandita besides Director Estates and other senior officials from the concerned departments were present in the meeting.

Regarding construction of new Legislature Complex at Jammu, the Speaker directed the concerned officials to complete the prestigious project on time.

The Speaker was apprised that

the work will be started within 10 days and will be completed in 18 months from the allotment of work.

Regarding replacement of digital sound system in the Assembly Hall at Jammu, the Speaker asked for an uninterrupted sound system without any inconvenience for smooth functioning of the upcoming Assembly Session.

The Speaker was assured that

the work related to replacement/AMC of sound system will be completed well before start of the next Assembly session along with the arrangements for NeVa Seva Kendra for MLAs in LA.

While reviewing the repair/renovation works at MLA Hostel Jammu and Srinagar, the Speaker asked the Director Estates to complete the works related to upgradation/repairing of civil and electric works. He was informed

that the works have already been started and will be completed in stipulated time frame.

The Speaker also directed to vacate the government offices functioning within the Assembly Complex as only offices related to Legislative Assembly should be functioning in the Legislative Complex.

Similarly, the Speaker was also given assurance about the timely completion of works related to installation of one lift in the additional block of MLA hostel Jammu and two lifts at MLA hostel Srinagar.

The Speaker, after reviewing the whole gamut of development works of Assembly Complex and MLA Hostel, instructed the officials to adhere to the set timelines.

Emphasizing on timely completion and maintaining high quality, the Speaker directed the concerned officials to speed up the work for early completion.

Debate, Dissent Part Of Healthy Democracy: VP Radhakrishnan At JNU

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

NEW DELHI, JAN 12: Vice President C P Radhakrishnan on Monday said that debate, discussion, dissent and even confrontation are essential elements



of a healthy democracy, but such processes must ultimately lead to a conclusion.

He underlined that once a decision is taken, there must be a collective willingness to cooperate in its implementation to ensure smooth and effective administration.

Addressing the ninth convocation of Jawaharlal Nehru University here, he urged the graduating students to dedicate their knowledge and skills to the service of the nation.

Recalling the teachings of Swami Vivekananda on his birth anniversary, the vice president said that education must go beyond degrees to build character, strengthen intellect and empower individuals to stand on their own feet.

He emphasised that education and proper training alone would enable India's youth to realise Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of a Viksit Bharat at 2047.

Highlighting India's civilisational tradition of knowledge, Radhakrishnan referred to the ancient centres of learning such as Nalanda and Takshashila and noted that Indian scriptures and classics, from the Upanishads and the Bhagavad Gita to Kautilya's Arthashastra and Thiruvalluvar's Thirukkural, have consistently placed learning at the centre of societal and ethical life.

He underlined that true education shapes conduct and character, and is not limited to the acquisition of degrees.

Referring to the democratic ethos of JNU, the vice president said that debate, discussion, dissent and even confrontation are essential elements of a healthy democracy. However, he added that such processes must ultimately lead to a conclusion. Once a decision is made, he emphasised, there must be a collective willingness to cooperate in its implementation to ensure smooth and effective administration.

The vice president urged graduates to uphold three core responsibilities — intellectual honesty in the pursuit of truth, social inclusion to reduce inequalities, and active contribution to national development.

He called upon them to remain guided by constitutional values and India's civilisational ethos, and to always respect their parents and teachers. (Agencies)

VB-GRAM G Act ensures employment, skill development, and rural prosperity: Ashok Koul

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, JAN 12: The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), Jammu & Kashmir, today organized a workshop on Viksit Bharat – Guarantee for Rozgar and Aajeevika Mission (Gramin), popularly known as the VB-GRAM G Act, 2025, at Church Lane, Srinagar.

The workshop was presided over by BJP General Secretary (Organization), J&K, Ashok Koul, along with BJP General Secretary, J&K, Anwar Khan, who addressed party workers and office bearers from across the Kashmir region.

J&K BJP Secretary Mudassir Wani, party spokespersons Altaf Thakur and Manzoor Bhat, Office Secretary Salinder Singh, Media Incharge Sajid Yousuf Shah, All Cells Co-Convenor Bilal Parray, Social-Media Co-Incharge Sajad Raina, senior party leaders, state office bearers, district presidents, Prabharris, and programme convenors and co-convenors from across the districts were present at the workshop.

Addressing the workshop, Ashok Koul said that the VB-GRAM G Act, 2025 is a landmark initiative under the vision of Viksit Bharat, designed to ensure guaranteed employment opportunities for 125 days—25 days more than the earlier 100 days—along with skill development and sustainable livelihoods in rural areas. He emphasized that the Act integrates employment generation with self-reliance by strengthening traditional occupations, promoting agri-based enterprises, rural entrepreneurship, women Self-Help Groups, and youth-led initiatives at the village level with a modern-day vision and technology.

Ashok Koul reiterated the Modi government's firm commitment to inclusive rural development, asserting that the VB-GRAM G Act will play a pivotal role in strengthening employment security, boosting rural prosperity, and realizing the vision



of Viksit Bharat in Jammu & Kashmir. He added that the workshop aimed at equipping party functionaries with an in-depth understanding of the Act so that they can actively spread awareness among beneficiaries.

Highlighting the significance of the legislation, Anwar Khan said that VB-GRAM G is not merely a welfare scheme but a structured development framework aimed at transforming rural socio-economic conditions. He stated that the Act ensures transparency, accountability, and convergence of existing rural development schemes, while empowering Panchayati Raj Institutions and community-based organizations.

Historic Decision at Cultural Academy: 34 Non-Gazetted, Class-IV Employees Promoted

JKAACL Employees Association Thanks Department of Culture and Senior Officers of JKAACL for Resolving Long-Pending Issue

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, JAN 12: A welcome and historic decision has been taken place for the employees of the Jammu and Kashmir Academy of Art, Culture and Languages (JKAACL) with the approval of long-pending Time Bound/In-Situ promotions. Following the approval, the Academy has issued Order No. 01 of 2026, under which 34 Non-Gazetted and Class-IV employees have been granted In-Situ promotions.

The decision has been implemented in light of the recommendations of the Departmental Promotion Committee (DPC) meeting held on July 9, 2025, which was convened after a long gap. The promotions have been sanctioned under the provisions of the Jammu and Kashmir Civil Services (Higher Standard Pay Scale Scheme) Rules, 1996 and SRO-14, and shall be effective retrospectively from the respective due dates.

As per the order, employees belonging to various categories including Executive Cadre, Junior Assistants, Accounts Assistants, Sweepers, and Orderlies/Chowkidars have been placed in their respective upgraded pay levels. This decision stands as a formal recognition of their long, sincere, and dedicated services rendered to the institution.



On the occasion, the Cultural Academy Employees Association expressed satisfaction and happiness over the decision and extended heartfelt gratitude to the Principal Secretary, Department of Culture, Government of Jammu and Kashmir; Secretary JKAACL, Ms. Harvinder Kour (JKAS); Additional Secretary (Kashmir), Mr. Adeel Saleem (JKAS); and Additional Secretary (Jammu), Ms. Sonali Arun Gupta (JKAS). The Association acknowledged that the vision, focused attention, and constructive coordination of these senior officers played a crucial role in resolving this long-pending matter.

According to the Association, the

approval of promotions will not only boost the morale of employees but will also positively impact the overall efficiency and performance of the Academy. The Association further expressed hope that timely Departmental Promotion Committee meetings will continue to be held in the future with the same spirit of fairness and continuity to ensure justice for deserving employees.

Reaffirming its commitment, the Association stated that it will continue to work with dedication, sincerity, and institutional dignity towards the promotion and preservation of art, culture, and languages in Jammu and Kashmir.

Sacred flames of Lohri illuminate Dogra culture at Baba Kailakh: Sat Sharma

Lohri fest organized by Baba Kailakh Nath Prabandhak Committee, Dogra culture highlighted

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

BANTALAB, JAN 12: J&K BJP President and Rajya Sabha MP, Sat Sharma, accompanied by BJP General Secretary Baldev Singh Billawaria and other senior BJP leaders, today inaugurated the breathtaking Lohri Festival programme organized by the Baba Kailakh Nath Prabandhak Committee at the historic Baba Kailakh Devasthan, Bantala.

The festival was organized under the leadership of Prabandhak Committee President Shakti Dutt Sharma, committee member Sunil Dutt Rakka and other organizers. The Lohri Festival beautifully reflected the soul of Dogra culture, showcasing traditional Dogri music, folk dances, age-old customs associated with Lohri celebrations, authentic Dogra cuisines, and captivating Dogra presentations, including the much-admired "Hiran" performances. Renowned poet Randhir Singh Raipuria enthralled the audience by reciting powerful Dogri poems, adding a literary charm to the vibrant cultural evening. The mesmerizing performances kept the audience spellbound till the very end.

Addressing the gathering, Sat Sharma said that festivals like



Lohri are the living symbols of India's cultural unity in diversity. He stated that Dogra culture has a glorious history rooted in traditions, spirituality, and community bonding, and such events play a vital role in preserving and promoting this priceless heritage among the younger generation. He lauded the Baba Kailakh Nath

Prabandhak Committee for consistently organizing culturally rich programmes that strengthen social harmony and cultural pride.

BJP General Secretary Baldev Singh Billawaria appreciated the organizers for presenting Dogra traditions in such a grand and authentic manner. He said that

cultural festivals not only entertain but also educate society about its roots and values, fostering a sense of belonging and respect for tradition.

Shakti Dutt Sharma explained that the Lohri Festival was organized to revive and celebrate Dogra traditions in their purest form. He said the programme

aimed to connect people with their cultural heritage while offering a platform to local artists to showcase their talent.

The programme concluded with the traditional "Holy Fire," where food products were offered as Ahuti to the Gods, followed by visitors relishing mouth-watering traditional Dogra cuisines, marking a spiritually fulfilling and culturally vibrant conclusion to the celebrations.

J&K BJP Vice-Presidents Rajiv Charak and Rekha Mahajan, Treasurer Prabhat Singh Jamwal, Media Incharge Dr. Pardeep Mahotra, OBC Morcha President Brahmjyot Satti, Yuva Morcha President Arun Prabhat, Mahila Morcha President Adv Neha Mahajan, Kissan Morcha President Rakesh Pant, District Presidents Adv Rajesh Gupta and Rinku Choudhary, spokesperson Zoravar Singh Jamwal, senior BJP leaders Bawa Sharma, Ayodhya Gupta, Parduman Singh, Veenu Khanna, Parmod Kapahi, Karan Singh, Surinder Sharma, Rajinder Singh Chib, Dilbahadur Singh Jamwal, Sanjay Bakshi, Ravish Mengi, Ajay Manhas, Surinder Gilli, Devinder Singh, Rajinder Singh, Anil Barsala, Pawan Dev Bhau, Rajat Soodan, Kuldeep Singh, and others were present on the occasion.



PSLV anomaly overshadowed by Gurgaon teen's futuristic launch idea

■ BY VIVEK SHUKLA

NEW DELHI, JAN 12 : Even as India's Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV) mission on Monday faced an anomaly after launch on Monday, an inspiring story of a few young scientists developing launching rockets in their work station at Gurugram came as a bright spot. These scientists, many of them are IITians, are led by Shreyans Jain, a young scientist and student of Shriram school.

The ISRO mission also marked a milestone for India's private space sector. For the first time, a single Indian private company, Hyderabad-based Dhruva Space, contributed seven satellites to a PSLV mission, underlining the growing role of private players in India's space ecosystem.

Amid this national event, what is encouraging is the way young innovators are pushing the boundaries of space science and technology in the country.

Shreyans Jain leads Celestial Aerospace in developing a revolutionary balloon-assisted rocket launch system. A large balloon carries the rocket to the



upper atmosphere, where thinner air reduces resistance. The rocket then ignites, saving massive fuel compared to ground launches.

Jain explains: "Launching from the ground requires fighting dense air and strong gravity, wasting huge amounts of fuel. Our method saves significantly, enabling the rocket to carry 2-3 times more payload into space."

For larger missions, the team is exploring high-pressure

inflatable structures powered by hot gases, potentially integrating advanced systems like nuclear propulsion for faster interplanetary travel.

"At higher altitudes, less air resistance means much more efficient rocket operation," Jain adds. Starting with solo research for months, Jain built a team of IIT graduates and young scientists. They are now advancing toward wind tunnel tests and small-scale

experiments, targeting a prototype launch by the end of 2026. The team has filed patents in India and internationally, with orbital launch as the ultimate goal.

Delighted that private sector has a great role in building India's space mission, young Jain says the private sector has become indispensable to India's space ambitions, transforming the ecosystem from a government-dominated model to a dynamic

public-private partnership.

Reforms since 2020, including the establishment of IN-SPaCe as a single-window regulator, liberalised FDI norms (up to 100 per cent in some areas), and policies like the New Space Policy 2023, have enabled private entities to lead in satellite manufacturing, launch vehicles, Earth observation, and downstream services.

It may be recalled that milestones like Dhruva Space's contribution of seven satellites to the recent PSLV mission highlight how private companies provide cost-effective, innovative solutions and increase launch capacity. Over 300 startups now operate across the sector.

"The private sector is crucial for scaling India's space economy — currently approx USD9 billion (2-3 per cent global share) and moving toward the government's target of USD44 billion by 2033. It fosters self-reliance by developing indigenous technologies, supports societal applications in agriculture, disaster management, telecom, and infrastructure, and positions India as a global launch provider," Jain concludes. UNI

SC appoints Sunena Sharma as special judge for coal block allocation scam cases

■ UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, JAN 12 : The Supreme Court on Monday appointed judicial officer Sunena Sharma as the Special Judge to hear cases relating to alleged illegality in the allocation of coal blocks across the country.

A bench comprising Chief Justice of India Justice Surya Kant and Justice Joymalya Bagchi passed the order on an application moved by the Delhi High Court, which stated that the present Special Judge, Sanjay Bhansal, had been holding the post for over four-and-a-half years and was due to be replaced.

Recording the submissions, the court noted that the Delhi High Court had formally sought to relieve Justice Bhansal and had placed a sealed envelope before the Supreme Court containing the names of three officers from the Delhi Higher Judicial Service for consideration.



Allowing the application, the Bench ordered the appointment of Sunena Sharma, an officer of the Delhi Higher Judicial Service, as the Special Judge for the coal block allocation scam cases.

The order was passed in the long-running Manohar Lal Sharma vs The Principal Secretary & Others case, commonly referred to as the coal scam case, in which the Supreme Court has been continuously monitoring the investigation conducted by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI).

The request to relieve the earlier Special Judge had been deferred by the Court last year.

In April 2025, Additional Sessions Judge Dheeraj Mor was appointed as Special Judge (PC Act) (CBI) (Coal Block Cases) to deal with matters arising out of the coal block allocation cases.

In 2014, the Supreme Court had cancelled 214 coal block allocations made since 1993, holding the allocation process to be illegal and arbitrary.

The court had also directed the constitution of a special court to conduct trials in the criminal cases arising from the coal block allocation scam and being investigated by the CBI.

With the appointment of Sunena Sharma, the Supreme Court has now ensured continuity in the adjudication of the coal block allocation cases under judicial supervision. UNI

Speaker shows chronology of House video on alleged remarks by Atishi

■ UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, JAN 12 : Delhi Assembly Speaker Vijender Gupta on Monday held a press conference and presented a video of House proceedings related to the alleged objectionable remarks made by Leader of Opposition Atishi against a Sikh Guru.

The video, Gupta said, chronicles events in the Assembly from January 6 to January 9. According to him, the issue was first raised in the House on January 6 at 3:54 pm, when Atishi allegedly used derogatory words. Upon reviewing the video footage on January 7, the video footage was reviewed and it found that objectionable remarks were made.



Gupta claimed that after the House examined the video and initiated action, attempts were being made to create a conspiracy, which he said amounted to an attack on the constitutional system. He clarified that the video had been sent for forensic examination at the opposition's request.

The Speaker also noted that Atishi had the opportunity to present her side in the House, being summoned on January 7, 8, and 9, but did not attend. Calling her absence "irresponsible," Gupta said the situation played with public sentiments.

He added that the purpose of showing the video was to ensure complete transparency and that the media was free to use the footage. "The Delhi Assembly seeks full clarity in this matter so the truth comes out clearly," Gupta said. UNI

Ignite the self, serve the nation: CJI Surya Kant recalls Vivekananda's message

■ UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, JAN 12 : Chief Justice of India Justice Surya Kant paid rich tributes to Swami Vivekananda, describing him as one of India's greatest visionaries and the country's finest international ambassador of culture and philosophy. While inaugurating a blood donation camp at the Supreme Court premises on Monday, the Chief Justice said that Swami Vivekananda's teachings remain deeply relevant, especially for the younger generation.

The blood donation camp was jointly organised by the Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA) and the Adhivakta Parishad, Supreme Court Unit, on the occasion of Vivekananda Jayanti.

"What a great visionary person Swami Vivekananda was. His teachings

are extremely important, especially for the new generation. Each word he spoke was visionary, full of moral and ethical values, and promoted our country's rich heritage and cultural ethos. He was India's greatest international ambassador of culture and philosophy," the Chief Justice said.

Justice Surya Kant was among several national leaders who paid homage to Swami Vivekananda on his 164th birth anniversary, observed across the country as National Youth Day. Leaders from different walks of life, including the Prime Minister Narendra Modi and West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, also paid their respects, recalling Swami Vivekananda's enduring message of character-building, self-belief, and nation-building.

A common theme running through the tributes was the emphasis on energising India's youth by drawing inspiration from Swami Vivekananda's ideals and guiding them towards the goal of building a developed and self-reliant nation. The National Youth Day this year was observed with the theme 'Ignite the Self; Impact the World'.

The Chief Justice's participation in the event highlighted the judiciary's engagement with national icons and social causes.

Justice Surya Kant took oath as the 53rd Chief Justice of India in November 2025 and has since been actively associated with initiatives that underline constitutional values, social responsibility, and inspiration drawn from India's civilisational heritage. UNI

India to host 28th Commonwealth Speakers' Conference; PM Modi to inaugurate, focus on AI and Social Media in Parliaments

■ UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, JAN 12 : India will host the 28th Conference of Speakers and Presiding Officers of the Commonwealth (CSPOC) from January 14 to 16, 2026, marking one of the largest inter-parliamentary gatherings in the country in recent years, with Prime Minister Narendra Modi set to inaugurate the event at the historic Central Hall of the Samvidhan Sadan on January 15. Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla, who will chair the conference, said the meet will focus on how emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence and social media are reshaping the functioning of democratic institutions.

Addressing a press conference on Monday, Birla said that the four-day event, including arrivals and post-conference engagements, would bring together Speakers and Presiding Officers from across the Commonwealth to deliberate on strengthening parliamentary democracy in a rapidly changing global environment.

"India is honoured to host the 28th CSPOC at a time when parliaments worldwide are grappling with new challenges and opportunities posed by technology, changing public expectations and concerns relating to the security and well-being of legislators," Birla said. "The focus this year will be on the application of artificial intelligence and social

media in parliamentary functioning, while preserving the core democratic values of transparency, accountability and impartiality," Birla said.

Prime Minister Modi will inaugurate the conference on January 15 at 10.30 AM and deliver the keynote address. Following the inaugural session, the Prime Minister will interact informally with the Speakers and Presiding Officers of Commonwealth and autonomous parliaments and participate in a group photograph. Modi had earlier inaugurated the 9th G20 Parliamentary Speakers' Summit (P20) hosted by India in October 2023, the last major inter-parliamentary conference held in the country.

CSPOC, established in 1969 on the initiative of the then Speaker of the Canadian House of Commons, Lucien Lamoureux, is an independent forum that brings together Speakers and Presiding Officers of the 53 national parliaments of Commonwealth countries. While it has no formal affiliation with the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA), the Commonwealth Secretariat or the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM), its membership mirrors that of the CPA. Canada has provided the secretariat for CSPOC since its inception.

The stated aims of the conference are to uphold impartiality and fairness among

Presiding Officers, promote understanding of parliamentary democracy in its various forms, and support the development of strong parliamentary institutions. The conference operates on a two-year cycle, with a full membership conference held every alternate year.

The decision to host the 28th CSPOC in India was taken during the 25th conference in Ottawa in January 2020, in consultation with the Ministry of External Affairs. The formal handover to India took place at the conclusion of the 27th CSPOC in Kampala, Uganda, in January 2024, when Deputy Chairman of the Rajya Sabha Harivansh led the Indian parliamentary delegation. UNI

Urban development landscape audits be aimed to enable govt provide quality services: CAG

■ AGRAJ PRATAP SINGH

NEW DELHI, JAN 12 : The cities in the country are extremely important for many reasons with a crucial one being that the nation has an avowed ambition to become a 30 trillion dollar economy by 2047, and the urban areas will be playing an important role as growth hubs in this journey.

The Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) Sanjay Murthy has said that the audits across the urban development landscape in the country may be oriented towards making constructive and implementable recommendations, to enable the government to provide high-quality urban governance and services to the citizens, contributing towards the nation's

growth and the ambition towards becoming a 30 trillion dollar economy.

It was between January 8 and 10, CAG's Regional Capacity Building and Knowledge Centre (RCB&KC), New Delhi, headed by Rajdeep Singh (Director General) conducted a three-day workshop "Urban Development and Governance," where the concluding session held on Saturday was chaired by the CAG. Murthy emphasised that learning from the workshop must be implemented in their respective audit domains by the officials concerned who attended the training, in a bid to support the economy's growth.

Speaking exclusively to UNI, retired IAS and now a Professor of Practice at the Indian School of Public Policy, OP Agarwal, who

headed the faculty that conducted the workshop, said that in all the economies around the world that witnessed rapid growth, the expansion was seen in the manufacturing and the services sectors, and such activities primarily happen in the urban areas.

He said that is why the cities in the country are extremely important for many reasons, especially from the perspective of economic growth, as they also cater to the youth for providing jobs in the manufacturing and services sector.

Agarwal has emphasised that the urban areas have to be prepared not only to accommodate the rapid growth, but also to proactively enable the same.

He stated that the way to go forward in line with rapid

progress is to strike the right balance, and for that the need is not only to follow a sustainable low growth path but also to keep supporting the economic activities.

He said that the planning and the infrastructure development of the cities need to be based on an economic vision and not as per the traditional process, which is incremental and does not take into account a future economic growth driver.

According to the expert, plans for the expansion and development of the urban areas need to be based on the vision for the future, while he also mentioned about Niti Aayog's new initiative of having twenty growth hubs and many states have already picked up this idea, he added.

Agarwal said that the idea is to have focused attention on selected regions which can be developed as growth hubs.

This would typically be a region around a city, which can be planned effectively to become a one trillion dollar economy, if there are twenty such then there are going to be twenty trillion coming in from such focused locations.

He also stated that the vulnerability to disasters is higher in cities, given their higher density and the need is to prepare them in advance for such challenges.

Futuristic plans based on key economic drivers for such focused regions will help determine the infrastructure needs and the land requirements for these needs, which is going to create a more credible basis for master

planning.

The Covid pandemic, earthquakes, or floods, have clearly shown that how cities are vulnerable to emergencies and disasters.

He pointed out that after considering all such challenges, what has been recognised is that there is a need to build capacity at the municipal level, state level, and the national level to deeply understand these challenges and also look at how these can be dealt with.

"In today's planning, it is important to identify what are going to be the economic drivers for the city, how fast do we need to go, and what is the ambition," he said.

Meanwhile, the workshop was attended by 71A&AS officers and 16 Senior Audit Officers and

Assistant Audit Officers from across the country.

The training was conducted by a faculty headed by Agarwal, with members like Chetan Vaidya, Former Director, School of Planning and Architecture (SPA), Hitesh Vaidya, Former Director, National Institute of Urban Affairs (NIUA) and Alok Shiomany, an expert in urban finance.

The training was aimed at critical areas relevant to the audit of urban local bodies and urban development institutions, including key topics such as importance of growing cities and the country's urban challenges, the existing legal and institutional framework for urban governance, financing of cities, issues in urban financial management, and sector-specific challenges. UNI





RCB Aim to Consolidate as UPW Worry Over Deepti's Form

■ UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

NAVI: Having come through a trial by fire in their opening game against Mumbai Indians, Royal Challengers Bengaluru will look to build on those gains when they take on a star studded UP Warriorz in the Women's Premier League here on Monday.

The Smriti Mandhana-led RCB, the 2024 champions, pulled off an astonishing three wicket win against MI on Friday, leaving Harmanpreet Kaur nonplussed, while South African stalwart Nadine de Klerk basked in the glory of a fine all round showing, sealing the victory with the winning runs off the last ball of the innings.

While Mumbai Indians bounced back quickly with an assertive win over Delhi Capitals in their second game on Saturday, the hurt and the memory of losing off the last ball when victory was virtually sealed are likely to linger with them for the rest of the season.

For Mandhana and RCB, however, it was a moment to cherish, and they will hope that de Klerk, who scored an unbeaten 63 and picked up four wickets, can recreate a similar performance against UP Warriorz. Mandhana would also want her top order batters, including herself, to get among the runs, given that de Klerk was the lone standout in the previous match, while the rest endured below par outings.

The top five batters, Grace Harris, Mandhana, Dayalan Hemalatha, Richa Ghosh and Radha Yadav will need to step up, while in the bowling department much more will be expected from the likes of Arundhati Reddy, Shreyanka Patil and Radha, who conceded the most runs against MI.

UP Warriorz, too, had their share of disappointments, none more glaring than all rounder Deepti Sharma, the costliest Indian buy at Rs 3.2 crore in the WPL auction. She endured a forgettable outing against Gujarat Giants in a day game on Saturday, as her team went down by 10 runs, with the star cricketer finishing wicketless and scoring just one run in the chase of a daunting 207.

UP Warriorz's new skipper Meg Lanning would like her ace all rounder to quickly find her rhythm and will also expect wholesome contributions from opener Kiran Navgire and Harleen Deol at the top, although Australian youngster Phoebe Litchfield's superb 78 in a losing cause would have given her some confidence.



Sabalenka wins Brisbane final amid frosty exchange with Kostyuk

■ ASSOCIATED PRESS

BRISBANE: Top-ranked Aryna Sabalenka has captured her second consecutive Brisbane International title, and 22nd overall, with a straight sets victory over Marta Kostyuk on Sunday.

It was the third year in a row Sabalenka appeared in the final and the Belorussian player looked in comfortable surroundings as she closed out a 6-4, 6-3 victory in just 1 hour and 17 minutes at Pat Rafter Arena.

The Brisbane International is a tuneup event for this year's Australian Open, which begins Jan. 18. Kostyuk went hard early by attacking Sabalenka's second serve, clawing back an early break with sublime drop shots that briefly rattled the world's top-ranked player.

However, the Belorussian's relentless intensity and match-smarts proved decisive as she exploited the oppressive Brisbane humidity with punishing baseline rallies to clinch the opening set in 40 minutes. As Kostyuk wilted under the physical strain, Sabalenka accelerated in the second set.

With a mix of raking groundstrokes and deceptive drop shots, she forced a mounting error count from the Ukrainian to close out the match without dropping a set all week.

After sealing the victory, Sabalenka looked down the court at Kostyuk and kissed both biceps - a likely nod to previous comments by the Ukrainian that she possessed higher testosterone levels



than other players.

Kostyuk has said the comments made in an interview last year had been taken out of context, but further the tensions between the pair since the Ukrainian's refusal to shake Sabalenka's hand after a match at the French Open in 2023.

The exchange resulted in a frosty post-match presentation. During the trophy ceremony, Kostyuk spoke passionately about her homeland but notably declined to mention Sabalenka by name.

"I want to say a few words about Ukraine," Kostyuk said. "I play every day with a pain in my heart. There are thousands of people who are without light and warm water right now, it's minus 20 degrees outside right now, so it's very, very painful to live this reality every day."

"I was incredibly moved and happy to see so many Ukrainian fans and flags here this week ... Slava Ukraini."

Rickelton does a KL Rahul as he hopes SA remember him

■ UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

CAPE TOWN: Ryan Rickelton hopes his second century at the SA20 will serve as a reminder of what he is capable of after he was left out of South Africa's 2026 T20 World Cup squad.

Rickelton smashed 113* off 60 balls for MI Cape Town against Joburg Super Kings as MICT won a second successive game and moved off the bottom of the points table.

His hundred came at his domestic home ground, the Wanderers, and in celebration, Rickelton drew on KL Rahul, who thumped his chest and gestured to the turf after scoring the winning runs for Delhi Capitals against Royal Challengers Bengaluru in last year's IPL.

For context, Rahul too was part of the opposition team that

night, but he was at a ground where he had grown up playing cricket - the M Chinnaswamy Stadium. Rickelton wanted to indicate the same when he slammed his bat into the Wanderers turf, then acknowledged his MICT badge and raised his arms aloft. Later, he revealed it was pre-planned. "I was actually thinking about celebrations recently. I saw KL Rahul do it in the IPL, probably when he was in between teams and just letting everyone know that he's there. I don't know why that was at the top of my mind, but it just came out the way it did," he said in a broadcast interview post-match. "I suppose maybe I thought about it going into the game or maybe these last couple of weeks, so it probably was an emotional outburst at the time. It was just the one at the front of my mind. I



remember KL's celebration quite vividly." Like Rahul, who has been dropped from India's T20I side, Rickelton has been sidelined by South Africa, partly because of Quinton de Kock's return and partly because of his own struggling form.

Rickelton scored one T20I half-century in five innings on South

Africa's tours of Australia and England - and that knock came in a losing cause - but was dropped for the subcontinent series in Pakistan and India. He also battled in ODIs, where he top-scored with 35 in eight innings across the away tours and recorded successive ducks in India.

Rickelton has admitted he

found the India trip particularly challenging and, before the World Cup squad was announced, said he was "at peace" if he didn't make it. He stuck to that line at the post-match press conference.

"In India, a couple of months ago, I didn't know if I was coming or going at that stage. I wasn't sure just what I was trying to do," Rickelton said. "It's such a big mental game and trying to work out my own game around that is probably the most difficult thing. I felt in India I was actually batting quite nicely, I just didn't have anything to return for it."

Since coming home, Rickelton has enjoyed success with MICT at the SA20. He scored a century in the opener at Newlands and is leading the run-charts in this edition of the tournament.

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