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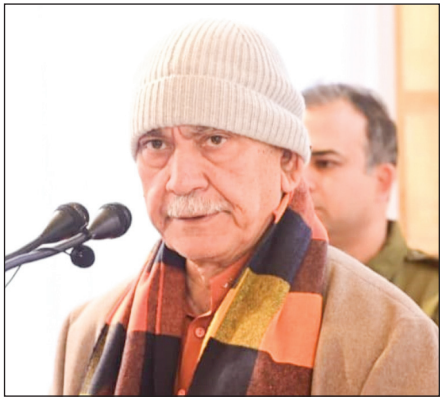
Indian Railways Is Backbone of Nation's Growth: LG Manoj Sinha

LG Urges IRMS Officer Trainees to Embrace Technology, Data-Driven Planning for Building a Developed India

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU, JAN 27: Lieutenant Governor Shri Manoj Sinha on Tuesday said that Indian Railways is not merely a transport system but the backbone of India's economic and social progress, calling upon young officers to lead its transformation through technology, innovation, and national commitment.

Interacting with Indian Railway Management Service (IRMS) Officer Trainees at Lok Bhavan here, the Lieutenant Governor described Indian Railways as the "cir-



culatory system of India's aspirations" that drives economic expansion, promotes social cohesion, and unites the nation from remote rural habitations to high mountain regions.

Addressing the trainees, Shri Sinha emphasised the need for developing tech-inspired railway infrastructure in tune with the vision of a developed India. He underlined the importance of harnessing operational, passenger, and freight data through scientific analysis to improve service delivery, enhance demand forecasting, optimise resource allocation,

● Turn on Page 2

Dr Jitendra Singh Hosts Republic Day Get-Together for J&K Tableau Team

Minister Lauds Artistes for Showcasing Region's Cultural Richness at Kartavya Path

■ HT NEWS DESK / AGENCIES

NEW DELHI, JAN 27: Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Science & Technology and Earth Sciences, and Minister of State in the Prime Minister's Office, Personnel, Public Grievances & Pensions, Atomic Energy and Space, Dr Jitendra Singh on Monday hosted a high-tea get-together for the Jammu and Kashmir tableau team that participated in the Republic Day Parade at Kartavya Path.

The interaction came a day after the Jammu and Kashmir tableau received widespread appreciation for its immersive and evocative depiction of the region's cultural diversity. The presentation portrayed the Union Territory as a seamless cultural continuum, blending her-



itage, community life and artistic expression into a coherent visual narrative.

Engaging with the performing artists, ● Turn on Page 2

Heavy snowfall hits life across J&K

■ HT NEWS NETWORK / KNO

SRINAGAR, JAN 27: The second heavy snowfall of the season in Jammu and Kashmir brought normal life to a halt on Tuesday, with air, rail, and road services suspended due to poor visibility and severe weather conditions.

According to the details available with the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) snowfall began late Monday night in the Valley, with South Kashmir areas, including the Shopian plains, receiving heavy snowfall and a fresh accumulation of 14–15 inches.

Meanwhile, parts of North Kashmir, including Handwara, Gurez, Karnah, and Uri, also received heavy snowfall, disrupting local interior roads in these areas.

Official data revealed that Zojila ● Turn on Page 2

Flights to Srinagar hit as heavy snowfall disrupts operations

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

NEW DELHI, JAN 27: Heavy snowfall in Srinagar on Tuesday disrupted flight operations, affecting services of major airlines including Air India and IndiGo.

Air India said arrivals and departures to and from Srinagar were impacted, adding that ground teams are assisting passengers while the situation is closely monitored.

● Turn on Page 2

CM Omar Abdullah Engages Stakeholders, Legislators to Shape J&K Budget 2026–27



■ HT NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU, JAN 27: Chief Minister of J&K, Omar Abdullah on Monday



held a series of pre-budget consultations in Jammu with key stakeholders and elected representatives, ● Turn on Page 2

CM Chairs Pre-Budget Meet in Jammu–Samba

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU, JAN 27: As part of the ongoing exercise for formulation of a people friendly and development-oriented budget, Chief Minister Omar Abdullah today chaired a pre-budget consultation meeting with Members of the Legislative Assembly from Jammu and Samba districts, here.

Discussions were held on sector-wise priorities, ● Turn on Page 2

J&K Speaker Calls All-Party Meet Ahead of Budget Session on Feb 2

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU, JAN 27: An all-parties meeting will be convened ahead of the Jammu and Kashmir Assembly's Budget Session, scheduled to begin next month, Speaker Abdul Rahim Rather said on Tuesday, urging legislators to make effective use of the proceedings by raising public issues for redressal.

The 27-day session will commence on February 2 with an address of Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha. The Omar Abdullah-led government will present its second budget ● Turn on Page 2

Fresh snowfall brings tourists back

Visitors throng snow-clad destinations; bookings surge

■ HT NEWS NETWORK / KNO

SRINAGAR, JAN 27: A fresh spell of snowfall has transformed Kashmir into a winter wonderland, triggering a renewed influx of tourists and boosting morale across the tourism and hospitality sectors.

According to the details available with the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) the tourists are braving chill to capture the snowy spectacle on their cameras from the slopes of ● Turn on Page 2

4 killed in Udhampur accident



■ HT NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU, JAN 27: Four people lost their lives in a tragic road accident in Jammu and Kashmir's Udhampur district on Tuesday, officials said. ● Turn on Page 2

LG Sinha, CM Omar express grief

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU, JAN 27: Four people lost their lives in a tragic road accident in Jammu and Kashmir's Udhampur district on Tuesday, officials said.

The accident took place around 11 am near the Jakhani–Chenani area on the Jammu–Srinagar National Highway. Officials said a bus travelling from ● Turn on Page 2

DDC Tenure in J&K to Conclude on Feb 24: Govt

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

The Jammu and Kashmir administration on Tuesday stated that the current five-year term of the elected District Development Councils (DDCs) will officially end on February 24, 2026.

According to an official order issued by the General Administration Department and accessed by news agency Kashmir News Service (KNS), the term of the ● Turn on Page 2

BRO Rescues 60, Including 40 Soldiers, From Snowbound Chatergala Pass in Doda

Swift High-Altitude Operation Restores Critical Road Links in Doda and Rajouri Districts Amid Heavy Snowfall

■ HT NEWS DESK / AGENCIES

JAMMU, JAN 27: In a major high-altitude rescue and road restoration operation, the Border Roads Organisation (BRO) on Tuesday successfully rescued 60 stranded persons, including 40 soldiers of the Rashtriya Rifles, from a snowbound stretch in Jammu and Kashmir's Doda district.

The operation was carried out under Project Sampark at the Chatergala Pass, located at an altitude

of about 10,500 feet on the Baderwah–Chatergala axis. A defence spokesman said the rescue was executed by the 118 Road Construction Company (RCC) of the 35 Border Roads Task Force (BRTF) after heavy snowfall, which lasted nearly 40 hours, buried the area under five to six feet of snow.

The clearance operation began on January 24, with BRO teams removing snow from nearly 38 km of road. By the evening of January 25, the route ● Turn on Page 2

Nirmala Sitharaman Poised For Record Ninth Straight Union Budget

Finance Minister Set to Extend Unmatched Run Under Modi, Inch Closer to Morarji Desai's All-Time Milestone

■ HT NEWS DESK / AGENCIES

NEW DELHI, JAN 27: Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman is set to create history on February 1 when she presents her ninth consecutive Union Budget, reinforcing her position as the longest-serving finance minister in terms of uninterrupted budget presentations in independent India.

The forthcoming Budget will bring Sitharaman closer to the over-

all record of 10 budgets presented by former Prime Minister Morarji Desai, who held the finance portfolio across multiple tenures. While Desai delivered his budgets over different periods, Sitharaman will continue to hold the distinction of presenting the highest number of budgets consecutively—nine in a row—under Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

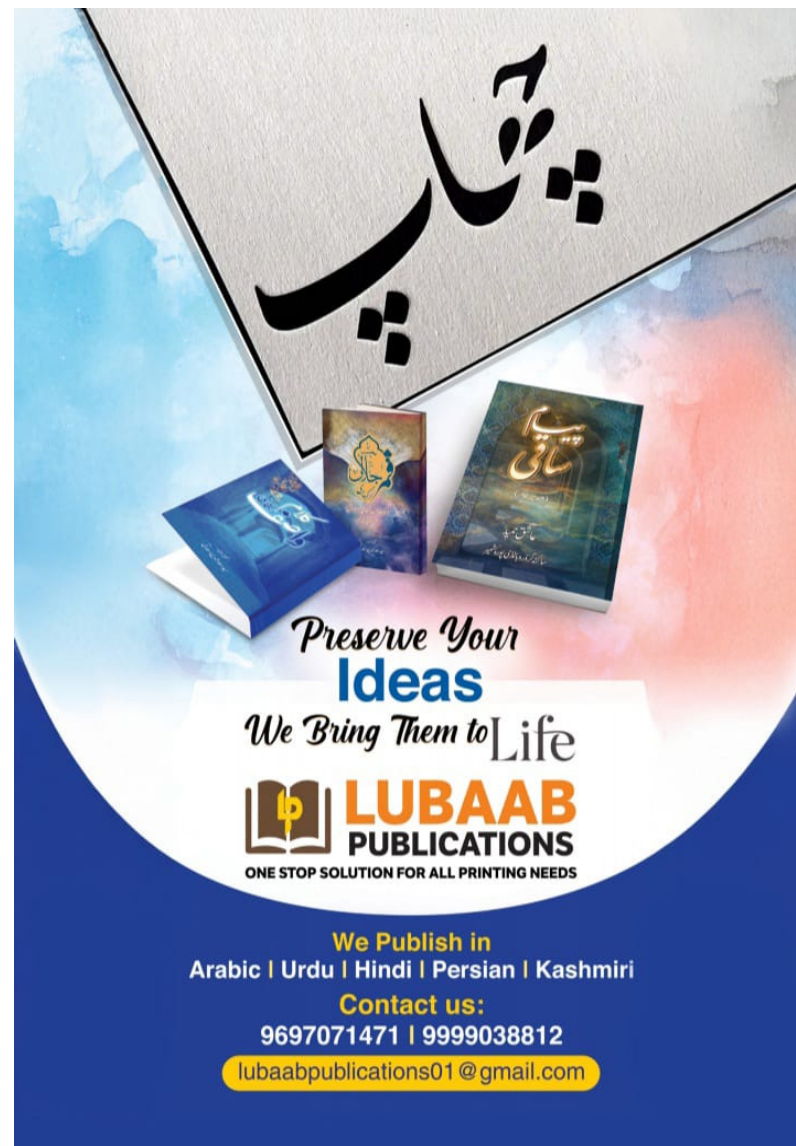
Appointed as India's first full-time woman finance minister in

2019 following the BJP's second-term victory, Sitharaman has retained the key portfolio even after Modi returned to power for a third term in 2024. She has so far presented eight straight budgets, including an interim Budget in February last year.

Desai, who remains the finance minister with the highest number of budgets overall, presented 10 budgets between 1959 and 1969 under Prime Ministers Jawaharlal

Nehru and Lal Bahadur Shastri. His tenure included both full and interim budgets, spread across two separate phases in office.

Among other former finance ministers, P Chidambaram ranks second, having presented the Union Budget on nine occasions under different governments. Pranab Mukherjee follows closely with eight budgets, while former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh ● Turn on Page 2



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CONTINUE FROM FRONT PAGE.....

Indian Railways.....

reduce accident risks, and strengthen infrastructure.

“Smart technology holds the key to reimagining Indian Railways as a sleek, passenger-first mobility powerhouse for the 21st century,” the Lieutenant Governor said, noting that with India’s growing economy, expanding cities, and increasing logistics demand, the Railways is steadily evolving to become faster, safer, and more reliable through improved operations and optimal use of resources.

Highlighting the role of reforms in the freight sector, the Lieutenant Governor said that dedicated freight corridors, modern logistics terminals, and integrated digital platforms can make freight transportation quicker, cheaper, and more competitive, thereby lowering logistics costs for industries and boosting the national economy.

He further stressed that the future lies in developing a multimodal logistics network by seamlessly integrating rail with road and other modes of transport to meet emerging mobility and freight requirements.

Extending his best wishes to the officer trainees, Shri Sinha urged them to keep national interest paramount in their professional conduct. “Every file, every decision, and every order must have the ultimate objective of serving the nation and contributing to the building of a developed India,” he said.

The IRMS Officer Trainees are visiting the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir as part of the Bharat Darshan programme.

Principal Secretary to the Lieutenant Governor, Dr Mandeep K. Bhandari; Course Directors Shri Rahul, Professor (Traffic Planning and Costing), and Shri Pranjalaya Parth Lathe, Professor (Logistics and Supply Chain Management), Indian Railways Institute of Transport Management, along with other senior officials, were present on the occasion.

Dr Jitendra Singh.....

designers, officials and support staff associated with the tableau, the Minister congratulated the team for its disciplined performance and collective effort. He said the tableau effectively communicated the cultural depth of Jammu and Kashmir to audiences across the country, enabling viewers to connect with the region’s traditions, colours and rhythms.

Dr Jitendra Singh said such cultural showcases align with the national vision articulated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, which emphasises development rooted in India’s civilisational heritage. He noted that highlighting local traditions, crafts and community life on national platforms reflects the idea that cultural confidence and development must move forward together.

Referring to the tableau’s visual elements, the Minister highlighted the depiction of lavender fields, the fine miniature art of Basholi and the region’s vibrant folk traditions, saying these aspects reflected the artistic richness and cultural continuity of Jammu and Kashmir and reinforced the contribution of regional identities to the national fabric.

The tableau opened with an engraved Samovar symbolising Kashmiri hospitality, followed by visuals of traditional wooden architecture and houseboat imagery. A Dogra Chhajja performance staged on a village Thadda formed the centrepiece, portraying community life and continuity of traditions in the Jammu region. Folk dances including Rouf, Kud, Jagarna, Pahari, Gojri and Dumhal added colour and movement, while the concluding display of papier-mâché artefacts arranged in a willow basket showcased the region’s craftsmanship.

The Minister encouraged the contingent to continue preserving and promoting traditional art forms while adapting them to contemporary platforms, noting that India’s journey towards Viksit Bharat @2047 would be shaped by cultural strength alongside economic and technological progress. The interaction concluded on a cordial note, with Dr Jitendra Singh expressing confidence that the Republic Day Parade would continue to serve as a vital platform for showcasing India’s cultural diversity as a source of unity and inspiration. (AGENCIES)

Heavy snowfall.....

received approximately three feet of snowfall, while Sonamarg recorded around two feet.

Gagangeer and Kulan Gund recorded nearly one and a half feet of snow, and the Kangan area in Ganderbal district saw about four inches of accumulation.

A senior official said administration teams are working around the clock to clear snow and reopen national and district roads across the Valley.

WEATHER TO IMPROVE FROM WEDNESDAY

The Meteorological Department has forecast additional snowfall late Tuesday night, but conditions are expected to improve from Wednesday morning, with dry weather predicted for the next 48 hours.

Meanwhile, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) warned of fresh snowfall and possible avalanches in higher reaches of J&K over the next 48 hours. A senior IMD official said the recent snowfall across the Valley has left snow depths ranging between 1 to 2 feet along the Pir Panjal range, from Kulgam to Kupwara. Gulmarg recorded 31 cm of snow in the lower reaches, while upper areas reported between 1.5 to 2 feet of accumulation.

“The snowfall that began yesterday is expected to reduce by Tuesday evening. By Wednesday

morning, most parts of Jammu and Kashmir will see clear skies, though some residual snow may remain in isolated areas by Wednesday afternoon,” the official said.

He added that a Western Disturbance is likely to bring light to moderate rain or snow in parts of Kashmir between Wednesday afternoon and Thursday, with heavy snowfall possible in areas along the Kulgam-Kupwara axis.

The IMD has advised residents and visitors not to venture into higher reaches during the next 48 hours due to increased risk of snow avalanches. Locals in snow-prone areas have also been urged to exercise caution.

People travelling on national highways across the Union Territory have been asked to follow the guidance of law enforcement and local authorities to ensure safety, the official said.

ANOTHER WESTERN DISTURBANCE TO HIT J&K ON FEB 1, 2

The IMD predicted that another Western Disturbance is likely to hit J&K on February 1 and 2, bringing fresh precipitation to the region.

The Jammu and Kashmir UT Disaster Management Authority (JKUTDMA) has issued a high alert warning of a potential avalanche with a high danger level above 2,000 metres in Bandipora, Baramulla, Ganderbal, and Kupwara over the next 24 hours.

Residents and visitors have been advised to avoid avalanche-prone areas and strictly follow official safety instructions. In case of emergencies, people are urged to dial 112 for immediate assistance.

SNOWFALL MAKES TOURISTS HAPPY

Tourists in Kashmir are making the most of the second snowfall this week, especially in the higher altitude areas. Places like Gulmarg, Pahalgam, and Sonamarg have turned into stunning winter landscapes, drawing large numbers of visitors.

Many were spotted enjoying the snow, taking in the scenic views, and experiencing the region’s enchanting winter atmosphere firsthand.

Furthermore, police personnel have assisted numerous people in reaching safer locations and provided help during medical emergencies amid heavy snowfall across the Valley, including in Sopore, Handwara, Bandipora, Ganderbal, and Kulgam.

Flights to.....

The airline advised travellers to check updated flight status and assured efforts to resume services once weather conditions improve.

IndiGo also reported continued disruption due to snowfall and urged passengers to verify flight details through its website or mobile app before heading to the airport.

The airline said passengers on cancelled flights can opt for alternate travel options or claim refunds online. UNI

CM Omar.....

underlining that the forthcoming Budget 2026–27 would be shaped by grassroots inputs, sectoral priorities and a firm commitment to transparency and inclusive development.

As part of the ongoing budget exercise, the Chief Minister first chaired an extensive interaction with representatives from industry and trade, tourism, hotel and hospitality, education, youth affairs and agriculture. Stakeholders highlighted sector-specific challenges and offered suggestions aimed at boosting economic growth, employment generation and regional development.

Addressing the participants, CM Omar Abdullah said the consultations were a meaningful exercise rather than a formality. “These interactions help bridge the gap between official assessments and ground realities. It is not possible for us, sitting in offices, to know everything, and such dialogues provide critical insights,” he said.

He emphasised that the presence of senior ministers and top officials reflected the seriousness of the process. “If we were not committed to listening, we would not have brought the entire government machinery here. Wherever possible, your inputs will be reflected in the budget and our policy framework,” the Chief Minister added.

The meeting was attended by Ministers Sakina Itoo, Javid Ahmed Dar and Satish Sharma; Chief Secretary Atal Dulloo; Additional Chief Secretary to the Chief Minister Dheeraj Gupta; senior officers from Finance, Tourism, Power Development, Industries and Commerce, Education and other departments.

Later, the Chief Minister chaired a separate pre-budget consultation with Members of the Legislative Assembly from Jammu and Samba districts to discuss sector-wise priorities and constituency-specific developmental needs. The legislators raised issues related to road infrastructure, healthcare and education upgradation, sports facilities, drinking water supply, tourism development and strengthening of basic amenities in urban and rural areas.

Addressing the MLAs, CM Omar Abdullah said the consultation process was continuous and aimed at ensuring meaningful participation of elected representatives in governance. He clarified that constituency-specific issues would be addressed during departmental grant discussions in the Assembly.

The Chief Minister also stressed strict transparency and accountability in the utilisation of 1,430 crore flood relief assistance received from the Government of India following the August floods. “The funds will not be distributed constituency-wise but allocated strictly on the basis of damage assessment and sectoral requirements,” he said, assuring time-bound and transparent utilisation.

Senior officers, Deputy Commissioners of Jammu and Samba districts and heads of key departments attended the meeting, while outstation officials joined through video conferencing.

The elected representatives appreciated the initiative and expressed confidence that their inputs would be duly examined and reflected in the upcoming budget, paving the way for balanced and inclusive development across Jammu and Kashmir.

CM Chairs.....

district-specific developmental needs and policy interventions aimed at balanced and inclusive growth.

The consultation was attended by Ministers Sakina Itoo, Javid Ahmed Dar and Satish Sharma, who also represents the Chamb Assembly constituency. Members of the Legislative Assembly present in the meeting included Dr Devinder Kumar Manyal (Ramgarh), Surjeet Singh Slathia (Samba), Rajeev Kumar (Bishnah), Gharu Ram Bhagat (Suchetgarh), Vikram Randhawa (Bahu), Yudhvir Sethi (Jammu East), Devyani Rana (Nagrota), Arvind Gupta (Jammu West), Sham Lal Sharma (Jammu North) and Mohan Lal (Akhnoor).

The meeting was also attended by Chief Secretary Atal Dulloo, Additional Chief Secretary to the Chief Minister Dheeraj Gupta, Additional Chief Secretaries of Power Development Department and Public Works Department, Principal Secretary Finance, Commissioner Secretary Industries & Commerce, Secretary Tribal Affairs, Secretary Rural Development, Deputy Commissioners of Jammu and Samba districts, Director General Budget, senior officers of the Finance Department and heads of key departments.

The outstation officers attended the meeting through video conferencing.

Addressing the legislators, Chief Minister Omar Abdullah said that the pre-budget consultations are part of a continuous and evolving process aimed at ensuring meaningful participation of elected representatives in shaping government priorities.

“I have reviewed the discussions held over the last few days. If we look at it from one side, this has been a continuous process. The good thing is that most of the issues raised were not repeated,” the Chief Minister said.

He emphasised that the purpose of these meetings is consultation rather than formal responses. “You and I both know that the government’s response to district development board meetings does not figure in these consultations. The objective here is to listen to you, understand your views and thoughts, and then translate them into policy and action,” he said.

The Chief Minister explained that constituency-specific issues would be addressed during the budget discussions in the Assembly when departments present their grants. “Whether it is the establishment of a degree college, irrigation-related works or other sectoral issues, answers will come when the concerned ministers present their grants in the House,” he added.

Referring to the funding received from the Government of India in the aftermath of the devastating floods that struck Jammu and Kashmir in August last year, Chief Minister Omar Abdullah stressed on ensuring complete transparency and accountability in utilisation.

“The flood relief amount of 1,430 crore received from the Government of India will not be distributed constituency-wise. Its distribution will be strictly based on the extent of damage and sectoral requirements,” he said.

Reiterating the government’s commitment, the Chief Minister assured the legislators that the funds would be utilised in a transparent and time-bound manner. “I assure you all that the money will be used properly, transparently, and all details will be placed before you,” he added.

Earlier, the MLAs from Jammu and Samba districts highlighted a range of issues and projects requiring priority attention in the forthcoming budget. Key demands included road widening and new road projects, upgradation of health and educational institutions, enhancement of sports infrastructure, provision of potable drinking water, development of tourist destinations, strengthening healthcare facilities with adequate staffing, and establishment of new colleges and schools in their respective constituencies.

The elected representatives also stressed the need for focused interventions to improve basic amenities and accelerate socio-economic development across urban and rural areas of the twin districts.

The MLAs expressed gratitude to Chief Minister Omar Abdullah for initiating the pre-budget consultation process, appreciating the government’s effort to incorporate grassroots perspectives and elected representatives’ inputs into the budgetary framework. The Chief Minister assured them that all genuine concerns and constructive suggestions would be duly examined and reflected in the upcoming budget to ensure inclusive and regionally balanced development across Jammu and Kashmir.

J&K Speaker.....

on February 6. This fifth session of the Assembly will conclude on April 4.

“Preparations to ensure a smooth assembly session are underway. We have already held meetings with various departments. An all parties meeting will be convened before the session starts on February 2. The Business Advisory

Committee meeting is also scheduled before the Lieutenant Governor’s address,” Rather said.

The session will be held in three phases, the first before the start of Ramzan and the remaining two after Eid-ul-Fitr in March and April. Ramzan is expected to begin on February 18 or 19, depending on the sighting of the moon.

According to the provisional calendar issued by the assembly secretariat, February will have 18 days of business. Chief Minister Omar Abdullah, who also holds the finance portfolio, will witness the present the budget for the 2026–27 financial year and the Supplementary Statement of Expenditure for 2025–26 on February 6. March and April will have five and four days of business, respectively.

The speaker said the discussion on the motion of thanks to the Lieutenant Governor’s address will start on February 3 and continue for three days. The Chief Minister is expected to reply to the debate on February 5. General discussion on the budget are slated for February 7, 9 and 10, followed by a reply from the chief minister.

As per the tentative calendar, seven days have been earmarked for the demand of grants between February 11 and 19, after which the Assembly will go into recess for one month and eight days. The session will resume on March 27 when the budget will be taken up for passing in the form of Appropriation bills.

As per calendar, March 28 and April 4 are reserved for government business. March 30 and April 1 are set aside for Private Member Bills, while March 31 and April 2 are for Private Member Resolutions.

Rather said that the provisional calendar will be placed before the Business Advisory Committee to be finalised. “My message to all legislators is to make proper use of the available time to raise public issues. People have high hopes and expect their concerns to be addressed. We should not waste the session on irrelevant matters; instead, we must remain focused on public issues and work sincerely towards finding solutions to their issues,” the speaker added.

Fresh snowfall.....

Gulmarg to the pine valleys of Pahalgam and the beautiful waters of Dal Lake in Srinagar.

“We came all the way from Delhi hoping to see snow and the timing couldn’t have been better,” said Rahul Malhotra, a tourist enjoying the snowfall.

“The whole Valley looks magical, like a beautiful picture coming alive,” he added.

The fresh snowfall and the heaviest so far this winter blanketed most parts of Kashmir, including Srinagar, on Tuesday much to the delight of tourists and locals alike.

Travel operators told KNO the spell has reignited winter tourism after a quiet start to January. “Tourism is clearly picking up pace now,” said Rouf Trambo, President of the Travel Agents Association of Kashmir (TAAK).

He said they are witnessing a surge in arrivals across destinations. “Most hotels and tour packages for the next few weeks are already booked. Fresh snowfall has given the much-needed boost to winter tourism,” he said, urging the government to reopen closed tourist destinations.

Echoing the sentiment, Tawqeer Ahmad, owner of Connect Kashmir Mobile and Travel Services, said inquiries and bookings have surged sharply since last week. “We have been getting non-stop calls since the snowfall began. Gulmarg and Pahalgam have heavy bookings for the coming weekend and even Srinagar houseboats are receiving a large number of inquiries,” he told KNO.

Locals associated with tourism say the revival comes as a relief after weeks of unusually dry weather. “Business was down earlier this month, but this snow has changed everything,” said Bilal Ahmad, who runs a cafe near Dal Lake.

“Tourists are back and so is the buzz we were missing.”—(KNO)

4 killed.....

The accident took place around 11 am near the Jakhani–Chenani area on the Jammu–Srinagar National Highway.

Officials said a bus travelling from Doda to Jammu lost control, hit a motorcycle, and then rammed into a load carrier that was parked on the roadside for repairs. A mechanic and the load carrier driver died on the spot. Two passengers travelling in the bus were thrown out through an emergency window and later succumbed to their injuries while being taken to hospital.

The deceased have been identified as Sanjeev Kumar, a mechanic from Udhampur; Rayes Ahmad of Badgam; and Mukesh Prajapati, a CRPF jawan posted in Kishtwar, who was on his way to his home in Madhya Pradesh on leave.

Another passenger, Bimla Devi, was injured in the accident and has been admitted to Government Medical College Hospital, Udhampur. Her condition is stated to be stable.

LG Sinha, CM.....

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Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha and Chief Minister Omar Abdullah as per news agency Kashmir Indepth News Service (KINS) expressed deep sorrow over the loss of lives. In his condolence message, the Lt Governor said he was deeply pained by the tragic accident and extended heartfelt condolences to the bereaved families, while praying for the speedy recovery of the injured. Chief Minister Omar Abdullah also conveyed his condolences and prayed for strength to the affected families during this difficult time. Meanwhile, Jammu Police have registered a case. (KINS)

DDC Tenure.....

Councils is set to conclude on the aforementioned date.

The order, citing a legal opinion from the Department of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs, clarifies that the tenure is governed by the Jammu and Kashmir Panchayati Raj Rules, 1996.

“Kind attention is invited towards the captioned subject. In this regard, it is to inform that as per the opinion rendered by the Department of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs, citing relevant provisions of the Jammu and Kashmir Panchayati Raj Rules, 1996 (Sub-Rule (2) and (3) of Rule 108(2P), the term of the DDCs commences from the date of issuance of the notification constituting the Councils (February 25, 2021). Accordingly, the Councils shall cease to exist with effect from February 24, 2026,” the order reads.

The government has directed concerned authorities to inform the respective Chairpersons and members of the DDCs in their districts about the completion of the term.

The order has been issued by Vilender Kumar Bhat, Under Secretary to the Government.

Notably, the DDCs, a key third tier of the grassroots democratic framework in Jammu and Kashmir, were constituted for the first time following elections held in November–December 2020.

BRO Rescues.....

was reopened, enabling the safe evacuation of 20 civilians and 40 personnel of 4 Rashtriya Rifles, along with their weapons and stores. The mission was completed in the early hours of January 26, with zero casualties.

The spokesman said the operation highlighted the professionalism and resilience of BRO personnel working in extreme weather and challenging terrain. The mission was carried out in close coordination with the Indian Army, ensuring swift relief and restoration of critical communication and movement links in the region.

Meanwhile, the BRO also restored connectivity in the Kandi–Kotranka area of Rajouri district, which was cut off following heavy snowfall in the Rajouri–Kandi–Budhal belt on Tuesday. Snow accumulation of up to three feet had disrupted movement along a strategic road stretch in the Pir Panjal region, severing the Kandi–Kotranka subdivision from Rajouri town and affecting both civilian and military movement, including medical emergency services.

Personnel of the 110 RCC of 31 BRTF, again under Project Sampark, launched immediate and sustained snow clearance operations, deploying specialised equipment and manpower. Within 14 hours, a single-lane road was opened for controlled vehicular movement, allowing emergency and essential services to resume.

The clearance and widening operations continued round-the-clock, and within 24 hours, approximately 35 km of road was fully restored, ensuring safer and smoother movement in the region.

The spokesman said the swift and coordinated response of the BRO once again reaffirmed its critical role in maintaining strategic connectivity and ensuring civilian safety in Jammu and Kashmir’s snow-prone and high-altitude region. (AGENCIES)

Nirmala Sitharaman.....

delivered five consecutive budgets as finance minister during the landmark reform period of the early 1990s.

Sitharaman also holds the record for the longest Budget speech in parliamentary history. Her presentation on February 1, 2020, lasted two hours and 40 minutes. In contrast, the shortest Budget speech—an interim one—was delivered by Hirubhai Muljibhai Patel in 1977, comprising just 800 words.

The tradition of Budget presentation has evolved significantly over the decades. Independent India’s first Union Budget was presented on November 26, 1947, by the country’s first finance minister, R K Shanmukham Chetty. For decades, the Budget was tabled at 5 pm on the last working day of February, a practice rooted in colonial-era time coordination with the United Kingdom.

This convention changed in 1999 when then finance minister Yashwant Sinha advanced the timing to 11 am. Further reform followed in 2017, when the Budget date was shifted to February 1 to allow parliamentary approval to be completed before the new financial year begins on April 1.

As Sitharaman prepares to present her ninth straight Budget, expectations remain high for measures aimed at sustaining economic growth amid global uncertainties and reinforcing fiscal stability. (AGENCIES)



Speaker JK LA interacts with media fraternity ahead of Budget session

Emphasizes smooth, responsible coverage of House proceedings

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU, JAN 27: Speaker J&K Legislative Assembly Abdul Rahim Rather today held a meeting with the media personnel of different news organisations at the Assembly Secretariat Jammu to facilitate smooth and efficient coverage of the forthcoming Assembly session starting from February 2, 2026.

The interaction was aimed at fostering better coordination and ensuring smooth, accurate and responsible coverage of proceedings of the House.

During the interaction, the Speaker emphasized the important role of the media in strengthening democratic institutions and keeping the public informed about legislative business. He highlighted the need for mutual cooperation between the Chair and the media to facilitate seamless coverage while maintaining the dignity, decorum and traditions of the House.

The Speaker said that the media acts as a vital bridge between the people and the legislature, ensuring the citizens remain aware of policies, discussions and decisions that shape governance across Jammu and Kashmir.

Recognizing the significance of media in highlighting public issues, the Speaker sought cooperation from media houses for



balanced and responsible reporting of the Session. He emphasized the critical role of journalists in ensuring transparency and public awareness of legislative discussions and advised them to keep public interests paramount while discharging their professional assignments.

The Speaker discussed various issues concerning media professionals, identifying additional requirements to enhance their working environment during the session. The deliberations also focused on ensuring hassle-free entry of media persons to the Legislative Assembly premises and as well as their facilitation for smooth coverage of the session.

The Speaker informed the media that pending work on the New Legislative Assembly Com-

plex will be started soon and shall be completed within 18 months. He also said that National e-Vidhan Application (NeVA) will be partially introduced in this session to encourage paperless functioning. He added that NeVA will be fully implemented in the next assembly session.

While reviewing the arrangements for media personal, the Speaker emphasized the importance of taking necessary measures to prevent inconvenience to journalists covering the proceedings. He instructed the Assembly Secretariat officers to prepare and issue entry passes for journalists in coordination with the Information Department well in advance for their unhindered entry into the assembly complex.

To enhance media accessibil-

ity, the Speaker directed the Information department to install sufficient number of microphones and Public Address Systems (PAS) within the Assembly Hall, facilitating smooth interaction between the dignitaries, Ministers, legislative assembly members and the journalists.

The Speaker directed the Hospitality & Protocol department to install Shamyana for press briefings and interviews by the MLAs and Ministers.

The Speaker also directed the SSP Security, Civil Secretariat to ensure hassle free entry of media persons along with appropriate parking arrangements near the Assembly Secretariat.

The IT department was directed to ensure WiFi and internet services with high speed so that the media persons, Legislators

and employees may not face any inconvenience during the session.

During the interaction, the Speaker also invited constructive suggestions from the journalists for improving media engagement and coverage of legislative business.

Representatives of both print and electronic media expressed their appreciation for the Speaker's proactive approach. They shared valuable inputs on improving accessibility and communication channels between the media and the Assembly Secretariat. They highlighted key concerns like designating parking spaces, entry passes, provision of high-speed Wi-Fi for seamless coverage and extension of other logistical support.

In response to concerns raised by the media fraternity, the Speaker assured them that the highlighted issues would be addressed promptly. He said the Assembly Secretariat remains committed to ensure a conducive environment for media persons to discharge their professional duties.

The meeting was attended by Director Information, Nitish Rajora; Secretary, JKLA, Manoj Kumar Pandita, SSP Civil Secretariat Security Sajjad Bhat, SSP Traffic Amit Bhasin along with veteran journalists, Bureau Chiefs, Senior journalists and correspondents besides representatives of All India Radio, Doordarshan and other concerned officers.

Deputy CM reviews post-snowfall situation in Budgam

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

BUDGAM, JAN 27: Deputy Chief Minister, Surinder Choudhary, today conducted an extensive tour of Budgam district to assess the post-snowfall situation, including snow clearance operations, restoration of essential services and healthcare facilities.

During the tour, the Deputy Chief Minister reviewed the snow clearance arrangements at the office of the Superintending Engineer, PWD Budgam. He directed the concerned authorities for prompt deployment of men and machinery in the affected areas. He stressed strict rationalisation of snow clearance equipment to ensure timely reopening of roads and restoration of connectivity. He emphasised that all available machinery must be pressed into service to clear main roads as well as interior links to facilitate hassle-free movement of the general public.



The Deputy Chief Minister also reviewed snow clearance operations across Khanshab, Beerwah, Chadoora, Charar-i-Sharif and Budgam areas.

Later, he inspected the Aga Syed Yousuf Memorial District Hospital, Budgam and enquired about the availability of healthcare facilities and essential medicines for patients.

He also reviewed restoration of essential services, including water and electricity supply. He directed the concerned departments to restore all affected services on a war footing.

"All essential services and road connectivity must be restored at the earliest to ensure seamless facilities for the people of Budgam," said the Deputy Chief Minister.

He also inspected the recently damaged bridge at Chadoora and directed the concerned authorities to ensure its early restoration. He further instructed the officers to enforce a strict ban on any kind of mining activity particularly near any vital public projects within Nallah Doodganga in the Chadoora area.

Later in the day, the Deputy Chief Minister visited the shrine of the revered Sufi saint Sheikh Noor-ud-Din Noorani at Charar-i-Sharif, where he paid obeisance. He also interacted with local delegations and the Shrine Intizamia, who apprised him of various issues and demands.

He was accompanied by MLA Chadoora, Ali Mohammad Dara and former Minister Aga Syed Mehmood.

Chief Engineers of M&HD, PMGSY and PWD, ADC Budgam, SDM Chadoora and other senior officers also accompanied the Deputy Chief Minister.

Senior Journalist Dr. Ab Qayoom Honoured by Tehsil Administration Langate

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

LANGATE, JAN 26: Senior Correspondent North Kashmir of Daily English Newspaper Headlines Today and Research Scholar, senior journalist Dr. Ab Qayoom, received a Certificate of Appreciation on the occasion of Republic Day celebrations held at the Tehsil Headquarters Handwara, organized by the Tehsil Administration Langate. The certificate



was awarded in recognition of his dedicated services in the field of journalism and his consistent efforts in highlighting public issues, administrative initiatives, and developmental activities in North Kashmir. Dr. Ab Qayoom expressed gratitude to the Tehsil Administration Langate for the honour and reaffirmed his commitment to continue serving society through responsible and constructive journalism.

Srinagar Admin, SMC conduct joint inspection to review Weather Preparedness in district

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, JAN 27: In view of the prevailing weather conditions, the district and municipal administration on Monday carried out a comprehensive joint inspection of key essential establishments, with special focus on major healthcare institutions and critical road networks across the city.

The inspection covered vital healthcare facilities, including Lal Ded Maternity Hospital and SMHS Hospital, along with major and interior roads such as Boulevard Road, Gupkar Road, and areas via Dargah Hazratbal, to assess ground-level preparedness and response mechanisms.

The visit was undertaken by the Additional Deputy Commissioner, Srinagar, Aadil Fareed, along with the Joint Commissioner, Srinagar Municipal Corporation (SMC), Suhail ul Islam and the Chief Planning Officer, Srinagar, Fayaz Ahmad.

The team was accompanied by the



Superintending Engineer, PWD (R&B), Srinagar, Tatheer Manzoor, Executive Engineers of the Civil and Mechanical Divisions, and other concerned officers.

During the inspection, the officers reviewed snow clearance operations, dewatering arrangements, and the availability of essential services and supplies to ensure uninterrupted functioning of critical healthcare facilities. Special attention was given to mechanical installations supporting hospital operations at SMHS and

Lal Ded Hospital. The team also visited the Mechanical Division Control Room at Shalteng to assess operational readiness.

The joint inspection was conducted under the overall direction and supervision of the Deputy Commissioner, Srinagar, Akshay Labroo and the Commissioner, SMC, Faz Lul Has- eeb as part of a coordinated strategy to ensure continuity of essential services, safeguard public convenience, and maintain readiness during adverse weather conditions.

Silent Service Gets Recognition: DEPO Mohd Iqbal Shah Honoured

■ DR. AB QAYOOM

KUPWARA, JAN 27: On the occasion of the 77th Republic Day celebrations, Mohd Iqbal Shah, District Education Planning Officer (DEPO), Kupwara, was honoured with an Award of Appreciation by the District Administration Kupwara at District Police Lines (DPL) Kupwara. The award was presented in the

presence of the Chief Guest, DDC Chairman Kupwara, Irfan Sultan Pandithpori, in recognition of Shah's outstanding dedication, integrity, and selfless service towards strengthening the education system in the district.

This honour stands as a testament to his years of silent and sincere efforts in educational planning and development.

His visionary approach and



tireless commitment have played a pivotal role in improving educational infrastructure, academic planning, and overall outcomes for students and teachers across Kupwara. The recognition has been widely appreciated by the education fraternity, who termed it a source of inspiration and motivation, reaffirming that genuine dedication and professionalism do not go unnoticed.

Grand Prize Distribution Ceremony Held at High School Zangulpora

■ FAROOQ RATHER

KULGAM, JAN 27: A grand prize distribution ceremony was organized at High School Zangulpora to mark the celebration of Republic Day. The event was held under the chairmanship of the Headmaster, Mr.

Farrooq Ahmad Rather, and witnessed enthusiastic participation from various sections of society.

Senior citizens of the area, retired officers, former Headmasters, parents, and all members of the school staff, including non-teaching staff,

attended the ceremony, adding dignity and significance to the occasion. Mr. Mohd Ashraf Lone, JKTF leader, graced the event as the Chief Guest.

During the ceremony, the outstanding academic achievements of the students were highlighted with pride. The

school secured four top positions in the Class 10th examinations, bringing laurels to the institution. Hummira Arshid topped the list with an impressive 498 out of 500 marks, followed by Faiza Nabi who secured 493/500, Burhan with 492/500, and Adeeba Ashraf who scored

488/500. The meritorious students were felicitated and awarded prizes by the Headmaster and the Chief Guest amid loud applause from the audience.

In his address, the Headmaster congratulated the students on their remarkable performance and appreciated the dedicated

efforts of teachers and the continuous support of parents. The Chief Guest also lauded the school administration for maintaining high academic standards and motivating students to strive for excellence.

The ceremony concluded with a heartfelt address and

vote of thanks by Mr. Lateef Ahmad Pala, Science Teacher of the school, who delivered his final speech on the occasion. He expressed gratitude to all dignitaries and participants and prayed to Almighty Allah for the continued success and bright future of the students.

J&K Tourism Department participates in FITUR Madrid

Tourists throng J&K stall, Kashmiri kehwa, VR videos captivate visitors

HT NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU, JANUARY 27: The J&K Tourism Department participated in the leading annual global trade fair for tourism FITUR in IFEMA Madrid held from 21st to 25th January 2026.

The delegation of J&K Tourism was headed by Nasir Aslam Wani Advisor to the Chief Minister. Besides, the delegation was comprised of Joint Director Tourism Kashmir Waseem Raja and Joint Director Tourism Jammu Ajaz Kaiser Malik.

The event was also attended by tour operators of J&K.

The highlight of the event was the facility of Virtual Reality (VR) which was introduced first time by the J&K Tourism Department. Visitors were mesmerised by watching the captivating videos of landscapes through the VR mode.

Besides, the display of arts and crafts of J&K like Paper Machine, Basholi Paintings, Wicker Willow



enthralled the foreign visitors. The Kashmiri Kehwa became a huge attraction among the foreign visitors. The beautifully designed

J&K stall with aesthetic display of arts and crafts received huge appreciation from the visitors and officials of the Ministry as well as

the Embassy.

The event started with inauguration of J&K Tourism Stall on 21st January by Advisor to CM,

with senior officers from Indian Embassy in Spain, officers of Ministry for Tourism Govt of India and leading tour operators participating in the inaugural.

In order to promote J&K Tourism at the global level, the J&K Tourism Department hosted a high tea for the tour operators on 22nd Jan 2026. The event was attended by a large number of leading tour operators and media persons. The event was graced by Ambassador of India in Spain and Advisor to CM J&K.

Besides, the Advisor to Chief Minister also attended a high profile meeting on promotion of Tourism hosted by the Indian Embassy in Spain on 23rd January.

During the five day event, the Advisor to the Chief Minister held meetings with various prominent tour operators and media persons for promotion of J&K Tourism at the global level.

The event concluded on 25th January 2026.

Rana reviews ongoing development works at Behra; announces Eco Park

HT NEWS NETWORK

MENDHAR, JANUARY 27: Minister for Jal Shakti, Forest, Ecology & Environment and Tribal Affairs, Javed Ahmed Rana, today conducted a comprehensive review of ongoing development works at Behra in Mendhar during a public outreach programme.

The Minister announced establishment of a new Eco Park in the area with an estimated cost of Rs. 45 lakh, aimed at promoting environmental conservation and providing recreational space for the locals.



Addressing the gathering, the Minister informed that several key road infrastructure projects approved under the Public Works Department (PWD) are currently under execution. These included macadamisation of the Behra-Qasab Road, repair of potholes on the Qasab-Tota Road, construction of upstream and downstream approach works to bridges and development of the Jaba-Behra bypass road. These all projects are expected to significantly improve the connectivity and ease of transportation in the region.

Highlighting the initiatives under the Tribal Sub-Plan, the Minister said that development works at the Eklavya Model Residential School (EMRS), Behra, are progressing steadily. These works are aimed at strengthening the infrastructure, improving amenities and enhancing the educational facilities, thereby ensuring better learning opportunities for the students from tribal and remote areas.

To bolster the power infrastructure, the Minister further announced that three transformers have been sanctioned for Mohalla Choor, Mohalla Chowdhirayan and Mohalla Numbardaran, which will help stabilize the electricity supply and cater to the growing needs of the local population.

During the interactive session, the residents raised several demands while seeking speedy redress of the same. These included establishment of playground near Behra, improvement of water supply, installation of hand pumps and provision of other essential civic amenities.

Responding to these concerns, the Minister assured the public that all their genuine demands would be examined and addressed on a priority basis.

The senior officers of the concerned departments were also present on the occasion. They interacted with the public and took stock of their grievances and suggestions.

DC Kupwara inspects Snow Clearance, Health Institutions in Lolab Sub-Division amid fresh Snowfall

HT NEWS NETWORK

KUPWARA, JANUARY 27: Deputy Commissioner Kupwara, Shrikant Suse, today undertook an extensive tour of Lolab Sub-Division to review snow clearance operations and assess the functioning of health institutions following the second spell of snowfall in the district.

The Deputy Commissioner was accompanied by SDM Lolab, Mudassir Ahmad; ACR Kupwara, Peerzada Mumtaz Ahmad and other concerned officers.

During the tour, the DC inspected ongoing snow clearance work on the Kupwara-Lolab Road, Badibera-Lalpura Road, and other interior roads.

He directed all snow clearing agencies including Mechanical Engineering Department, R&B, and PMGSY to expedite snow clearance across all routes to ensure uninterrupted movement and minimize inconvenience to the public.

The Deputy Commissioner also visited Sub-District Hospital Sogam, where he inspected various sections including OPD, Dialysis Unit, X-Ray, Laboratory, Pharmacy, Gynaecology, Labour Room, Dental Section, and other facilities.

He reviewed the duty roster of doctors and hospital staff and instructed the Block Medical Officer to ensure the uninterrupted delivery of healthcare services. Besides, he inspected NTPHC Lalpora and verified staff attendance and duty arrangements.

The Deputy Commissioner also reviewed the movement of essential services in Lalpora Tehsil and directed the concerned Tehsildar to ensure prompt clearance of snow heaps from the main chowk at Lalpora to facilitate smooth traffic flow and public convenience.

Later, the DC chaired a review meeting at the SDM Office, Sogam, to assess the status of snow clearance and the functioning of essential services in the Lolab Sub-Division.

The meeting was attended by SDM Lolab, ACR Kupwara, Executive Engineer R&B, Tehsildar Lalpora, and other concerned officers.

DM Jammu reviews implementation of SC/ST protection laws

HT NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU, JANUARY 27: A meeting of the District Level Vigilance and Monitoring Committee was held here today under the chairmanship of District Magistrate Jammu, Dr Rakesh Minhas to review the implementation of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989 and the Protection of Civil Rights Act, 1955.

Senior Superintendent of Police Jammu, Joginder Singh; Additional District Development Commissioner Sher Singh; Additional Deputy Commissioner Vidhu Shekhar; Additional Commissioner Revenue (ACR) Dr Rajesh Kumar, Block Development Officer Bhalwal Dr Sunil Sharma, along with representatives of social organisations, including R.K. Kalsotra, State President, All India Confederation of SC/ST/OBC Organisations J&K; Yashpal Shivgotra, Retired Superintendent, Central Water Commission; Keshav Chopra, Samvedna Society NGO and Amit Kumar, DISHA



Volunteer Organisation attended the meeting.

At the outset, District Social Welfare Officer, Dr Preeti Sharma gave a detailed briefing regarding the status of registered cases under the Acts.

The Committee thoroughly reviewed 11 cases. After careful scrutiny, 2 cases were approved for compensation as FIRs have been registered in these matters. The aggrieved persons would be provided

compensation of Rs 25,000 each as per the provisions of the law. The remaining cases were earmarked for further investigation to ensure compliance with legal procedures.

The District Magistrate emphasised the need for timely disposal of cases and directed the concerned departments to ensure strict implementation of the legislation to safeguard rights of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.

Principal GMC Srinagar ensure Healthcare Readiness amidst Adverse Weather

HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, JANUARY 27: In view of the prevailing adverse weather conditions, Principal/Dean Government Medical College (GMC) Srinagar, Prof. (Dr.) Iffat Hassan, conducted an extensive visit to all associated hospitals, accompanied by Administrator Associated Hospitals, Mohammad Ashraf Hakak.

The visit covered SMHS Hospital, Super Speciality Hospital Shireen Bagh, Lalla Ded (LD) Hospital, Chest Disease Hospital, Bone & Joint Hospital, Children Hospital Bemina, Psychiatry Hospital, SDH Block Hazratbal, Kashmir Nursing Home,



UG/ PG Hostels, Nursing Hospital GMC Srinagar and others.

Prof. Iffat reviewed healthcare

facilities preparedness, directing Medical Superintendents to ensure uninterrupted patient care, essential medicines, emergency services, and critical care services.

She emphasized zero tolerance for lapses in patient services during harsh weather. The Administrator assured full administrative and logistical support, stating departments are on high alert.

Medical Superintendents confirmed essential facilities are in place and staff is deployed for seamless healthcare delivery.

Bashir Ahmad Bhat, Personnel Officer, and other officers accompanied the Principal/Dean during the inspection.

J&K HCLSC, DLSA Jammu conduct inspection of Central Jail Kot Bhalwal

HT NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU, JANUARY 27: Under the guidance of R. N. Watal, Principal District and Sessions Judge (Chairman DLSA Jammu), Jammu & Kashmir High Court Legal Services Committee (J&K HCLSC) and District Legal Services Authority (DLSA) Jammu on Tuesday conducted a joint inspection of Central Jail Kot Bhalwal.

Sunil Kumar, Secretary-J&K HCLSC and Maleeka Sharma- Secretary, DLSA Jammu visited the Central Jail to get first-hand appraisal of the living conditions of under-trial prisoners and other inmates, besides reviewing the overall functioning of the jail, including the Prison Legal Aid Clinic. The visiting judicial officers, in the presence of the Senior Superintendent, interacted with the under-trial and convicted prisoners in the ground area of the jail and took stock of facilities



available.

The primary aim of the jail visit was to screen out poor prisoners who fall within the ambit of "Support to Poor Prisoners Scheme". Further, the visiting officers directed the Prison Authorities to identify those convicts who can avail the benefit of "Policy Guidelines for Remission/Premature release of Life Convicts" and refer the list to the Empowered Committee.

The inspection also covered a wide range of areas, including the Jail Legal Aid Clinic, Virtual VC rooms, interview area, prisoner calling system, Jail Hospital, Kitchen Area, etc.

The team observed that some areas of the jail premises require renovation and the Superintendent was asked to identify the issues and coordinate with the concerned authorities under the applicable rules.

Legal awareness camps held across Reasi district

HT NEWS NETWORK

REASI, JANUARY 27: Under the visionary leadership of Chairman Khalil Choudhary (also Pr. District and Sessions Judge Reasi) and Secretary Pooja Gupta, the District Legal Services Authority Reasi, in collaboration with Social Welfare Department, organized an awareness camp on Prohibition of Child Marriage Act at Madarss-Kheral.

The general public was made aware about the ill effects and legal consequences of child marriage, provisions of the Prohibition of child Marriage Act, 2006 and the importance of ensuring education, health and overall development of children. They were also informed about free Legal Aid services available through DLSA Reasi and the role of Legal Services Authorities in safeguarding the rights of women and children.

Another awareness program



themed "Say no to Drugs" was organised at Garan-by PLVs of TLSC Katra. The locals were sensitized to the harmful effects of drug abuse and the need for prevention and rehabilitation.

They were encouraged to seek timely, confidential and stigma free assistance through the National Drug De-Addiction Helpline (1933), Tele-MANAS-National Health Assistance and Wellness Support Helpline (14446), reinforcing a rights based and compassionate approach to recovery.

Meanwhile, door-to-door awareness on the benefits of Lok Adalats and Free legal aid was conducted by PLVs of DLSA Reasi and TLSC Mahore.

The masses were made aware about the process of bringing cases before the Lok Adalat, eligibility criteria for availing free legal aid, the types of matters that can be settled. PLVs also responded to the queries of the participants

Saras Mela 2026 to Kick Off in Jammu from January 31st

MD JKRLM reviews preparations for grand event

HT NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU, JANUARY 27: The Jammu and Kashmir Rural Livelihood Mission (JKRLM) is all set to host an expansive edition of the Saras Mela, starting from 31st January to 9th February at Kala Kendra here.

Ahead of this grand event, Mission Director JKRLM, Dr. Shubhra Sharma reviewed preparations and emphasised on the need for coordination among officials to ensure the smooth conduct of the mela.

"Saras Mela is about opening doors for rural women to dream bigger, showcase their creativity, connect with buyers and turn their skills into lasting opportunities that can uplift entire communities," Dr Shubhra Sharma said.

She added, "We want participants to connect with buyers, gain hands-on experience with modern marketing and digital tools and also build networks that last beyond the mela. Many women have already started turning these interactions into small but sustainable businesses, inspiring others in their villages. By bringing together Self-Help Groups from across India, we aim to create lasting opportunities, boost confidence



and encourage innovation so that entrepreneurship becomes a way of life in rural communities".

Pertinently, this grand Mela draws women from Self-Help Groups in Jammu and Kashmir and across other states into one shared space.

On their tables lie hand-woven fabrics, homemade foods and everyday products shaped by village life with small, practical reminders of how SHG members across India work, eat and earn a living beyond the spotlight.

Saras Mela provides rural women with a platform to display their products and interact with urban consumers. While it does not guarantee long-term market access, some participants develop lasting links with buyers, creating trade networks that continue beyond the event. It also exposes SHG members to modern branding and packaging, giving them insights into customer preferences and a rare experience of a larger marketplace.

Visitors can expect stalls representing multiple states, featuring everything from handloom and handicraft pieces to authentic regional cuisine. The mela unfolds as a meeting point of hands and habits, painted wood, slow-cooked food and customs carried from home with each stall shaped by the place it comes from and the people who stand behind it.

For the women behind the stalls, Saras Mela is a chance to step outside their villages and place their work before new eyes. What they have made over months is met with questions, interest and at times, quiet approval. At each stall, each sale is more than a transaction, as it represents a step towards independence, greater confidence and new possibilities.

EPFO Srinagar conducts Nidhi Aapke Nikat 2.0 outreach programme in Ganderbal

HT NEWS NETWORK

GANDERBAL, JANUARY 27: Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO), Regional Office Srinagar, successfully conducted its flagship outreach programme "Nidhi Aapke Nikat (NAN) 2.0" today, in District Ganderbal, amid heavy snowfall.

Despite the challenging weather conditions, EPFO ensured the smooth conduct of the NAN programme to extend social security services to members and stakeholders at their doorstep.

The programme was led by the Regional Provident Fund Commissioner-II, Vinay Kumar, along with a team of EPFO officials. The outreach aimed to educate employers, employees, and other stakeholders about various EPFO services, schemes, and recent Government initiatives related to social security.

During the interaction, the EPFO team apprised participants of key Government initiatives aimed at strengthening social security and labour welfare across the country.

It was highlighted that the Government has launched the Employees' Enrolment Campaign-2025 to expand social security coverage. The campaign will remain operational till 30 April 2026, providing establishments an opportunity to enrol eligible employees and regularise past records with ease.

Participants were also briefed about the Government's decision to implement the Four Labour Codes, which aim to simplify, consolidate, and modernise labour laws, thereby improving compliance and ease of doing business.

The EPFO team further highlighted the objectives of Prayaas Yojana, an important

initiative to ensure the timely settlement of Provident Fund and Pension benefits on the day of superannuation, enabling employees to transition into retirement in a smooth and dignified manner.

Information was also provided regarding the Pradhan Mantri Viksit Bharat Rozgar Yojana (PMVBRY).

The objectives, key benefits, and implementation strategy of the scheme were explained in detail.

Special emphasis was laid on improving member services, including Joint Declaration, KYC updation, UAN generation and activation, bank account seeding, and other online facilities available on the EPFO portal.

During the programme, several grievances and queries raised by employers and employees were addressed on the spot, reinforcing EPFO's commitment to timely and effective grievance redressal even under adverse weather conditions.

Speaking on the occasion, Vinay Kumar, stated that EPFO Regional Office Kashmir remains committed to extending social security coverage to the maximum number of employees working in the private sector. He emphasized that EPFO schemes such as Provident Fund, Pension, and Insurance (EDLI) play a vital role in providing financial security to employees and their families. He urged employers to ensure timely compliance and encouraged workers to actively use EPFO's digital services for faster and transparent service delivery.

The programme concluded with an interactive session, reaffirming EPFO's resolve towards a member-centric, transparent, and technology-driven social security system, even in difficult terrain and weather conditions.

Govt departments, institutions celebrate R-Day across Jammu Division

HT NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU, JANUARY 27: The Government departments, educational institutions and Prison Department across Jammu Division joined the Nation in the Republic Day celebrations.

Agriculture Department: Agriculture Department Jammu celebrated the 77th Republic Day with great pride and patriotic fervour at the Directorate of Agriculture, Krishi Bhawan. Director Agriculture Jammu, Anil Gupta unfurled the National Flag

and took the salute, marking the solemn occasion. The programme was attended by all the officers and staff of the Directorate.

As part of the celebrations, the staff presented a colorful cultural programme featuring patriotic songs and awareness skits.

Later, the Director Agriculture gave away awards to several employees in recognition of their dedication and outstanding performance.

District Jail Kathua: The 77th Republic Day was celebrated with patriotic fervour at District Jail

Kathua.

Jail Superintendent, Mohinder Paul unfurled the National Flag in the presence of jail staff and personnel of the CRPF. The ceremony marked the celebration of the spirit of the Constitution and national unity within the jail premises. The jail inmates also participated in the celebrations.

Central Jail Jammu Kotbhalwal: 77th Republic Day was celebrated at Central Jail Kotbhalwal with great joy and enthusiasm. Celebration started with the unfurling of the National Flag by

Jail Superintendent, Chhabil Singh who also spoke on the importance of the Republic Day.

Officers/officials of Jail and CISF were present on the occasion. A colourful cultural programme was presented by jail staff, CISF and inmates. Bara Khana was also arranged for inmates on the eve of Republic Day.

GDC Basohli: Government Degree College (GDC), Basohli celebrated the 77th Republic Day with enthusiasm and patriotic zeal.

Principal and the chief guest of the function, Prof. Raj Kiran

Sharma unfurled the National Flag followed by a Guard of Honour presented by the NCC cadets of the college.

Addressing the august gathering, Prof. Raj Kiran Sharma highlighted the significance of the Indian Constitution and emphasized the need to uphold its values in both personal and professional life.

The programme concluded with the singing of the National Anthem, filling the atmosphere with pride, unity and national spirit.

SKUAST-K organises MSME-sponsored MDP to boost E-commerce for local products

HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, JANUARY 27: To strengthen the digital footprint of regional entrepreneurship, Sher-e-Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology of Kashmir (SKUAST-K) inaugurated a one-week MSME-sponsored Management Development Program (MDP) at the Shalimar campus today.

The program, titled 'Management of E-Commerce for Promoting Local Products and Tapping Unexplored National Markets', organised by SKUAST-K's Institute of Business and Policy Research (IBPR), is designed to equip participants with the digital tools necessary to bridge the gap between local production and national consumer demand.

In his keynote address, Dr SH Baba, professor IBPR, provided an insightful overview of contemporary e-commerce strategies and the managerial frameworks required to stay competitive in the digital age.

He emphasized that mastering digital platforms is no longer optional but a necessity for promoting local products in a crowded national market.

Earlier, Dr Omar Fayaz Khan, Assistant Professor IBPR and organiser of the MDP, highlighted how e-commerce acts as a force multiplier for market visibility.

Dr Ashiq H Lone, Co-Coordinator, further underscored the importance of collaborative networks and aligned the program's objectives with NEP guidelines for student development.

Sponsored by the Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME), Government of India, the week-long training aims to transform the local business landscape by empowering participants with practical managerial skills for effective business expansion.

District Admin Kupwara ensures continuity of Essential Services amid Snowfall

HT NEWS NETWORK

KUPWARA, JANUARY 27: Despite persistent snowfall and challenging weather, the District Administration Kupwara has implemented comprehensive, coordinated measures to maintain road connectivity and uninterrupted essential supplies across the district.

Road-maintaining agencies including MED, R&B, PMGSY, BRO, and Urban Local Bodies are collaborating closely to restore access. Under Priority-I, II & III routes, MED has restored more than 85% road connectivity. Similarly, R&B and PMGSY authorities have been directed to restore the connectivity on an urgent basis as per priority. BRO is also working promptly to restore connectivity in boarder areas.

Today, Senior officers including DC Kupwara, ADC Handwara, ACR Kupwara, SDM Lolab and Tehsildars



reviewed snow clearance operations on ground as well as functioning of health institutions.

Electricity and drinking water restoration is progressing steadily in affected areas, with field teams addressing snowfall-induced disruptions and prioritizing essential installations.

The district holds sufficient pre-positioned food grain stocks in border and remote areas to meet needs for months ahead. No shortages of essential commodities are reported. LPG, petrol, and diesel remain adequately available district-wide.

All health institutions are operating normally, with ample medicines, emergency drugs, and oxygen support, especially in border and high-altitude zones. Ambulance services and medical staff have been deployed for prompt emergency response.

A Joint District Control Room is currently operational round-the-clock at DC Office, Kupwara and handling the issues being raised by the general public through coordinated efforts from the concerned departments.

Kathua pays tributes to the son of soil Martyr Capt Sunil Choudhary

HT NEWS NETWORK

KATHUA, JANUARY 27: A solemn tribute paying ceremony was held today at Capt Sunil Choudhary Chowk Kathua to commemorate the death anniversary of Martyr (Capt Sunil Choudhary), who laid down his life in the service of the nation.

Member Legislative Assembly Kathua, Dr Bharat Bhushan, Deputy Commissioner Kathua, Rajesh Sharma, SSP Kathua Mohita Sharma, Army officers, family members of the martyr, prominent citizens and Ex-Servicemen gathered to pay floral tributes and honour the supreme sacrifice of the brave soldier. Army personnel also paid rich tributes, adding solemnity



to the occasion.

Speaking on the occasion, Col (Retd) P.L. Choudhary, father of the martyr recalled the bravery and dedication of Capt Sunil Choudhary, who attained martyrdom while confronting militants in Assam on January 27, 2008. He said

that his son's sacrifice continues to inspire the younger generation and his legacy will always remain alive in the hearts of the people. Addressing the gathering, the MLA and the DC highlighted the exemplary courage and valour of Capt Sunil Choudhary, describing him as a proud son of Kathua district. They also paid tributes to all martyrs from the region. "All of them made supreme sacrifices for the unity and integrity of the nation," they said while terming Kathua as a land of brave warriors. The dignitaries expressed hope that such commemorative events would strengthen patriotic values among the youth and motivate them to contribute actively towards nation-building.

JKEDI conducts week long training for entrepreneurs under MDP in Udhampur

HT NEWS NETWORK

UDHAMPUR, JANUARY 27: Jammu & Kashmir Entrepreneurship Development Institute, District Startup Cell, Udhampur, successfully trained 32 entrepreneurs including 27 women entrepreneurs under the Management Development Programme implemented as part of the Raising and Accelerating MSME Performance initiative of the Ministry of MSME, Government of India.

The one-week comprehensive training programme featured expert-led sessions by professionals from successful industries, financial institutions, marketing sector, academia and other relevant domains.

The sessions offered valuable insights into the latest business regulations, prevailing market practices and effective enterprise management strategies.

Additionally, simulation-based business games and practical exercises were conducted to provide hands-on experience and enhance experiential learning among participants.



The programme was designed to enhance business management competencies, improve operational efficiency and build resilient entrepreneurial capabilities. Participants were equipped with practical skills and strategic insights aimed at fostering sustainable enterprises and contributing to the growth of the local entrepreneurial ecosystem.

JKEDI continues to play a pivotal role in promoting entrepreneurship and empowering aspiring as well as existing entrepreneurs through structured capacity-building programmes across the Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir.

GDC Ramban welcomes new Principal

HT NEWS NETWORK

RAMBAN, JANUARY 27: Government Degree College Ramban today welcomed its new Principal Prof. Romesh Kumar Atri on the college campus.

Staff Secretary, Dr. Jawaid Sarver along with faculty members accorded a cordial welcome to Prof. Romesh Kumar Atri.

The Staff Secretary highlighted the academic achievements, administrative experience and professional journey of the new Principal. Faculty members expressed their happiness and confidence in Prof. Atri's leadership, reaffirming the institution's commitment to academic excellence and the holistic development of students.

Prof. R.K. Atri expressed gratitude to the management, Staff Secretary and faculty members for the warm reception. He shared his vision for the growth and progress of the institution, emphasizing quality education, innovation in teaching-learning processes, student-centric initiatives and the promotion of a collaborative academic culture.



Several senior faculty members, including Prof. Satish Kumar, Prof. Raj Kumar and Dr. Romesh Kumar also shared their views and extended best wishes to the new Principal.

HT EDITORIAL

Be innovative to solve drinking water woes of masses

Given the fact that there has been very less precipitation in the Kashmir valley during Chillai Kalan the valley residents are apprehensive about the supply of drinking water in the coming months especially during the upcoming summer season. The dry winter of 2025 led to drinking water woes for the people of Srinagar district and other districts of the Kashmir valley. There were places where people came out in protest and demanded an end to drinking water woes.

Chillai Kalan, the harshest period of winter season is considered to be the perfect period for the accumulation of snow both in the higher reaches and plains of the Kashmir valley. Like last year this year too there has been very less snowfall during Chillai Kalan and as such there has been very less accumulation of snow. Less precipitation during winter means that the people of Kashmir would be up against many odds in the upcoming summer season.

Not only drinking water, people of the Kashmir valley depend on snow for carrying out agriculture and horticulture activities. As horticulture is the mainstay for the Kashmir economy it is important that there is a continuous supply of water for the proper growth of different fruits. Same holds true with the agriculture produce with water being needed on a regular basis for paddy and other crops. In other words, it can be said that water is the real life-line of the people of Kashmir.

As far as supply of drinking water is concerned the Jal Shakti department comes out with the assertion that since snowfall has been less, they are not in a position to supply round the clock quality water to the people of Kashmir valley. There is no doubt that due to climate change and related factors the amount of snowfall has come drastically in Kashmir. That does not mean that the Jal Shakti department gives up and comes out with the excuse that it is not possible to solve the drinking water problems of the people of Kashmir.

Time has come when more options need to be explored in this regard so that the common man feels relieved at the end of the day. If the officers and officials of the Jal Shakti department are receiving hefty sums as monthly salaries they need to be more responsive towards their duties. They need to come out with a solution to the drinking water problems of the common masses.

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Newspaper Reading Keeps Us Updated



■ SAHIL MANZOOR BHATTI

It has been centuries since the first newspaper was printed in the year 1605. In India, the first newspaper was published in 1779 by James Augustus. The Times of India is one of the leading newspapers in the country today, and there are a number of other prominent newspapers that are published daily in different countries across the globe. Newspaper reading adds new words to our vocabulary and provides us with current general knowledge about our surroundings. It is one of the most reliable sources of information and helps people remain aware of what is happening around them.

Today, everyone should have a gallery of knowledge to tackle difficult situations in day-to-day life. Every individual needs to be capable of facing different kinds of hardships and achieving success in life. Today's world is fully laced with advanced technology, and society needs technically skilled, energetic, and active people who possess good communication skills. These skills help individuals deal with others properly, politely, and in a humble and kind manner.

Language is simply a medium through which we communicate with each other and express our ideas and thoughts. At the same time, we are living in a competitive world where we must have skills, motivation, and strong communication abilities. One should possess a wide range of knowledge to express thoughts clearly and confidently to the outside world. Reading newspapers regularly strengthens language skills and improves both reading and writing abilities.

During vacations, several coaching institutes offer English-speaking courses, personality-development training, and language-learning classes to help students prepare for employment. Nowadays, the competency level is very high among learners and job-seeking youth, but at the same time, many of us still lack essential skills. Education is mandatory to obtain a reputed job and earn a



respectable income. Being educated enhances one's morale, develops personality, and increases self-respect and dignity.

There are many other sources that we should utilize to develop our overall personality. The time is not far when our nation will witness a revolution in education and development. A nation grows when its youth come forward with full zeal and enthusiasm, carrying dreams for the country and for themselves. When we start to develop positive thoughts, set big goals, and move ahead with strong determination, no one can stop us from achieving success.

In today's article, I am going to explore the benefits of newspaper reading and how it helps us become educated unintentionally. These days, social media plays a major role in spreading information quickly. It brings many good things to light, but at the same time, it also has a negative side. Due to the influence of social media, many people spend more time on mobile phones instead of engaging in productive physical and mental activities. This habit can affect concentration and overall development.

Several Android applications display current happenings on mobile phones within a short time, and Google

also plays a vital role in keeping us updated in day-to-day life. However, the newspaper is quite a different and more reliable learning medium for students and members of society. Newspaper reading helps us learn new words, understand proper sentence formation, and improve pronunciation. It provides a wide gallery of knowledge within a short period and keeps us informed about important national and international events.

Newspaper reading helps us know what is happening throughout the world, the country, and the state. It provides detailed information about politics, sports, education, health, science, and technology. It also gives updates about weather conditions, national highways, job advertisements, government schemes, and renowned places worth visiting. By reading newspapers regularly, people become aware of the position of the share market, the state of the economy, and other significant developments.

Most importantly, newspaper reading enhances our vocabulary because editors use new and trending words in news columns. Readers come across various sentence structures and writing styles, which help improve their own writing skills. Other interesting features are also published in news-

papers, including poetry, short stories, recipes, advertisements, religious facts, puzzles, cartoons, jokes, and educational articles. These sections make newspaper reading both informative and entertaining.

Newspapers also play an important role in shaping public opinion. They encourage people to think critically about social issues and national matters. Editorials and opinion columns present different viewpoints, which help readers develop their own perspectives. This habit strengthens analytical thinking and decision-making abilities.

Another major benefit of newspaper reading is that it builds discipline. When a person develops the habit of reading a newspaper daily, it becomes part of a healthy routine. Spending a few minutes every morning reading a newspaper is a productive way to start the day. It refreshes the mind and prepares a person to face daily challenges with confidence.

For students, newspapers are extremely useful. They help in preparing for competitive examinations, improving language skills, and staying informed about current affairs. Many questions in examinations are based on current events, and regular newspaper reading provides accurate and updated information. Teachers also encourage students to read newspapers to broaden their knowledge base.

Newspapers in our country are published in many languages such as English, Urdu, and Hindi. Readers can choose the language they are most comfortable with and enjoy their favourite columns. This helps people from different backgrounds stay connected with national and global developments. Newspapers unite society by spreading awareness and promoting understanding among people.

In conclusion, newspaper reading is one of the best habits that a person can develop. It increases knowledge, improves language skills, builds confidence, and keeps us updated about the world. If you want to enhance your personality, broaden your thinking, and stay informed, make newspaper reading a part of your daily routine. It is an inexpensive and easily accessible source of knowledge that benefits people of all ages.

sahilmanzoor0401@gmail.com

The Quiet Mind That Defined a Generation of Thought

Remembering Syed Saeed Ahmad Khurshid Bukhari, a teacher-poet who kept Kashmir's classical intellect alive



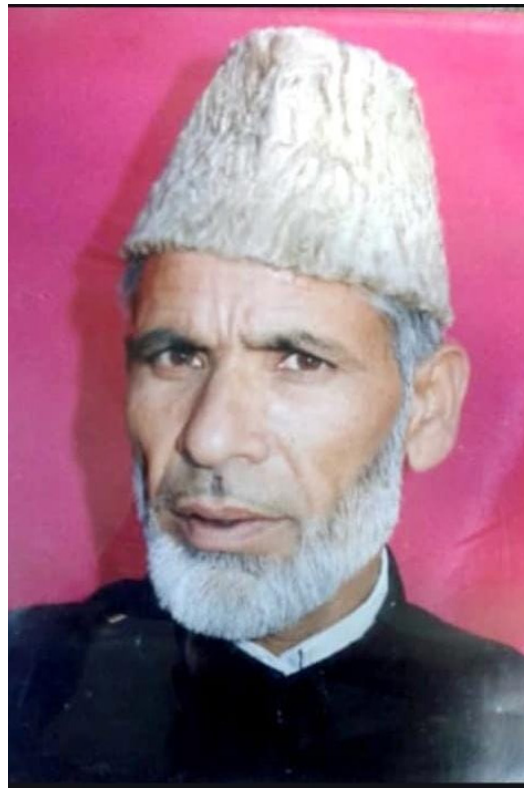
■ SYED VIKAS UL HAQ BUKHARI ALNAQVI

Syed Saeed Ahmad Khurshid Bukhari occupies a distinctive place in Kashmir's intellectual and literary history—one shaped not by noise or notoriety, but by depth, discipline, and enduring influence. A man of learning, restraint, and moral clarity, he represented a generation of scholars for whom knowledge was a trust and culture a responsibility.

Born in 1944 into a family known for scholarship and refinement, Bukhari inherited a tradition that valued learning as the cornerstone of social and moral life. This inheritance defined his temperament and informed every sphere of his engagement—education, literature, and faith.

From an early age, he gravitated toward classical learning, developing a deep command of Arabic and Persian. These languages, central to Kashmir's intellectual heritage, shaped his literary sensibility and critical outlook. Their influence was evident in his prose and poetry, marked by linguistic elegance, conceptual clarity, and measured expression.

After completing his formal education, Bukhari joined the Education Department as a teacher. For



him, teaching was not a bureaucratic role but a calling. He believed education was as much about shaping character and conscience as it was about imparting information. His classrooms became spaces of thoughtful inquiry, ethical reflection, and cultural grounding—qualities that left a lasting

impression on generations of students.

In literary circles, Bukhari was known as a seasoned poet, a reflective writer, and a discerning critic. His poetry drew upon classical traditions while engaging deeply with human experience and spiritual contemplation. Free from excess and ornamentation, his work carried a quiet authority rooted in sincerity and intellectual discipline.

As an author, he produced several respected works that earned recognition among scholars and readers alike. His writings are distinguished by intellectual maturity, stylistic restraint, and linguistic precision. His final and most significant book, *Kanarch Raat*, stands as a culmination of his creative journey and intellectual evolution.

Bukhari's life was equally grounded in religious and social engagement. Closely associated with the historic Jamia Masjid in Srinagar, he regularly participated in scholarly and religious discussions. His engagement with the Qur'an and Islamic studies reflected balance and depth, marked by reflection rather than rhetoric.

Personally, he was defined by simplicity, integrity, and quiet dignity. He shunned self-promotion and remained distant from public acclaim, choosing instead a life of consistent service to knowledge and culture. In doing so, he came to embody a living intellectual tradition—one increasingly rare in an age of spectacle.

Syed Saeed Ahmad Khurshid Bukhari passed away on August 25, 1993. Though his voice fell silent, his influence did not. Through his teaching, writing, and example, he continues to shape Kashmir's cultural and intellectual memory—proof that the most enduring legacies are often built in silence.



Kashmir Valley Transforms into a Winter Wonderland



■ MOHAMMAD HANIEF

As winter finally settles across the Himalayas, the Kashmir Valley once again transforms into a sweeping winter wonderland. Fresh snowfall cloaks mountains, plains, forests and wetlands in pristine white, reshaping the region into a landscape of striking beauty and deep ecological importance. Yet this arrival carries a quieter undertone. The snow, though enchanting, has appeared later than expected, raising concerns about the environmental consequences of delayed snowfall on the Valley's fragile natural systems.

The recent snow brought by western disturbances marks the onset of Chillai Kalan, traditionally the harshest phase of Kashmir's winter. Historically, snowfall during this period followed a predictable rhythm, gradually building a protective cover that sustained ecosystems through months of cold. In recent years, however, winters have grown increasingly erratic. Delayed snowfall, extended dry spells and sudden temperature fluctuations are disrupting climatic patterns that both nature and communities have relied upon for generations.

Across Srinagar and its surrounding areas, winter reshapes familiar landscapes. Chinar trees stand draped in white, their bare branches forming intricate patterns against muted skies. The Zabarwan range appears softened by snow, while the Jhelum River flows through a subdued cityscape. Mughal gardens lie silent beneath snow, revealing geometric elegance in winter stillness. Beneath this calm, however, lies an environmental imbalance triggered by late snow accumulation.

Snowfall plays a critical role in insulating soil and regulating ground temperatures. When snow arrives late, prolonged exposure to cold air causes deeper soil freezing, damaging plant roots and reducing the soil's capacity to retain moisture. Orchards, particularly apple plantations that anchor Kashmir's rural economy, are vulnerable to such stress. Delayed snow limits gradual moisture recharge essential for spring flowering, affecting yields and long term soil health.

The consequences of delayed snowfall become even more pronounced in the Valley's wetlands. Dal Lake and marshlands



such as Hokersar, Haigam, Mirgund and Shalbugh serve as winter lifelines for migratory birds arriving from Central Asia, Siberia and northern Europe. These birds time their journeys to coincide with historical winter conditions in Kashmir, where wetlands remained partially ice free and rich in food resources.

When snowfall is delayed, wetlands experience extended dry or semi frozen conditions without the insulating benefit of snow. Water temperatures fluctuate, aquatic vegetation suffers and insect populations decline. Birds arriving on schedule often encounter degraded feeding conditions, forcing them to expend additional energy searching for sustenance. Once snow finally arrives, freezing can be abrupt, compressing feeding opportunities into a shorter window.

Large congregations of birds are then pushed into shrinking open water patches, intensifying competition and increasing vulnerability to stress and disease. Wetlands that once functioned as stable winter refuges face heightened ecological pressure as seasonal cycles compress. Human disturbance during this sensitive period can further weaken the ability of migratory species to survive winter in the Valley.

Forested ecosystems across Kashmir

are similarly affected. Delayed snowfall allows wildlife to remain at higher altitudes longer than usual, altering migration and foraging patterns. When heavy snow eventually falls, animals descend rapidly toward lower elevations, often into human dominated landscapes. This sudden movement increases the likelihood of human wildlife conflict and places added pressure on already fragmented forest corridors.

Snow also governs the Valley's hydrological cycle. Gradual accumulation followed by slow melt replenishes springs, streams and aquifers. Delayed snowfall followed by sudden warming causes rapid runoff rather than absorption, reducing groundwater recharge. This threatens water availability during early summer and weakens the ecological link between winter precipitation and agricultural sustainability.

Winter tourism, while visually enhanced by fresh snowfall, is not immune to these shifts. Destinations such as Gulmarg, Pahalgam and Sonamarg depend on consistent snow cover for seasonal livelihoods. Delayed snowfall shortens the tourism window, creating economic uncertainty. Discussions around artificial snowmaking raise additional environmental concerns, including water extraction and energy use in sensitive alpine zones.

For local communities, delayed snowfall disrupts traditional preparedness. Historically, snowfall signalled predictable changes in mobility, fuel use and resource management. Uncertain winters complicate planning, increasing dependence on external energy sources and placing additional strain on infrastructure. Traditional knowledge systems, finely tuned to seasonal cues, are increasingly challenged by shifting climate behaviour.

Administratively, delayed snowfall complicates winter management. Road clearance, power supply and water distribution systems are designed around historical patterns. Sudden heavy snow following prolonged dry spells strains these systems and heightens the risk of disruption. Ecological monitoring has also become more complex, as authorities balance human needs with protection of wetlands and wildlife habitats during unpredictable winters.

At a broader level, delayed snowfall reflects climate variability across the Himalayan region. Warmer autumns, shifting precipitation and rising average temperatures are altering Kashmir's winter identity. These changes threaten not only seasonal beauty but also the ecological processes that have sustained biodiversity and agriculture for centuries.

Despite these concerns, snowfall still brings renewal. Snow binds landscapes, ecosystems and communities in a shared seasonal experience. It restores visual harmony and replenishes moisture starved land, even when late. Yet timing now matters as much as presence.

Conservationists warn that protecting Kashmir's winter environment now requires a more integrated approach that recognises snow as an ecological resource rather than a seasonal inconvenience. Wetland restoration, protection of inflow channels, regulation of construction near lakes and stricter control of winter disturbance are increasingly viewed as essential safeguards. Forest conservation, particularly maintaining continuous corridors, is equally vital as wildlife movement patterns shift in response to erratic snowfall.

Public awareness has also emerged as a critical component of winter resilience. Understanding how delayed snowfall affects water security, food systems and biodiversity can encourage more responsible behaviour during peak winter months. Reduced pollution, mindful tourism practices and respect for sensitive habitats can collectively ease pressure on ecosystems already strained by climate variability.

The future of Kashmir's winters will likely depend on how effectively environmental planning adapts to changing patterns. Scientific monitoring of snowfall trends, groundwater recharge and migratory bird populations is becoming indispensable. Integrating traditional ecological knowledge with modern climate research may offer pathways to sustain the Valley's delicate balance.

In this evolving landscape, winter remains both a warning and a promise. Snow continues to define Kashmir's identity, but its shifting rhythm signals the need for deeper understanding and protection. Preserving the Valley's winter wonderland now means safeguarding the timing, quality and ecological role of snowfall itself, ensuring that beauty and balance endure together for generations to come.

Only by recognising winter as a living system, rather than a static season, can Kashmir hope to navigate the uncertainties ahead. The snow that arrives, early or late, carries lessons about limits, resilience and responsibility, reminding all who witness it that nature's timing remains central to survival in the Himalayan heartland. That truth now defines the Valley's future more than ever before collectively.

The author is a senior analyst and can be mailed at m.hanief@gmail.com

X/Twitter: @haniefmha

Young Kashmiri Creator Faisal Ayoub Bhat Revives Mother Tongue Through Digital Content



■ BURHAN NAZIR

Faisal Ayoub Bhat, a 15-year-old student from the beautiful village of Irote Damjan in District Anantnag, is making his presence felt in the digital world through content creation. Currently studying in Class 10, Faisal started his journey in 2020 with gaming videos. Later, he experimented with comedy, vlogs, and other types of content, even handling more than 15 different channels. However, he felt unsatisfied and continued searching for his true voice.

In August 2025, Faisal started his journey again with a proper motive and passion. This gave birth to his new venture, "Faisal Speaks." What makes his content stand out is his decision to produce videos in the Kashmiri language.

Faisal feels that the Kashmiri language is not just a language but an identity. "Kash-eer zabaan che saanie pehchaan," he says, highlighting the need to preserve and promote the mother tongue. With very few people producing meaningful content in the Kashmiri language, Faisal wants to fill



this void and give the Kashmiri language and culture a proper online presence

His aim is to encourage Kashmiri youth to express themselves, stay connected to their roots, and feel proud of their language and culture. Through honesty and passion, Faisal wants to encourage

His vision is to inspire Kashmiri youth to express themselves, stay connected to their roots, and feel proud of their language and culture. Through honesty and passion, Faisal hopes to encourage others to protect and promote Kashmiri for future generations.

The Night



■ NIKITHA.M

Whisper the night,
Shadow dance, secrets take flight
Moonlight keep a gentle pace
Dreams unfold, a hidden place
Stars appears like diamonds bright,
A night for magic, a gentle light
The world is hushed, a peaceful sight
In darkness, hearts beat with delight
In this silent, dreamy space
Echoes of memories take their place,
Faded whispers, a gentle breeze
Stir the embers of forgotten seas
Lost waves crash on distant shores
Echoes of laughter, what we adore
Faded petals of a rose,
Memories linger, where love once chase
Softly falls the morning dew
On forgotten dreams and memories true
In whispered prayers, a heart does sing
A lonely melody with love's sweet ring,
The wind it howls like a mournful sing
As shadows dance upon the wall,
In moonlit night, the stars do align
A celestial map, to a love that's gone astray.

Std V, Christ central School,
Muthoor (Tiruvalla)





THE EMOTION CORD



■ **DR. SURINDERPAL SINGH**

Pain is a universal human experience that extends beyond the physical body to include emotional and psychological dimensions. Across cultures and philosophical traditions, pain has often been interpreted as the outcome of one's deeds or actions. This belief can be metaphorically described as an emotion cord—an invisible linkage connecting experiences, emotions, behaviour and suffering. While ancient interpretations viewed this connection in moral or spiritual terms, contemporary science provides a framework to understand how emotions and actions shape pain in tangible biological ways.

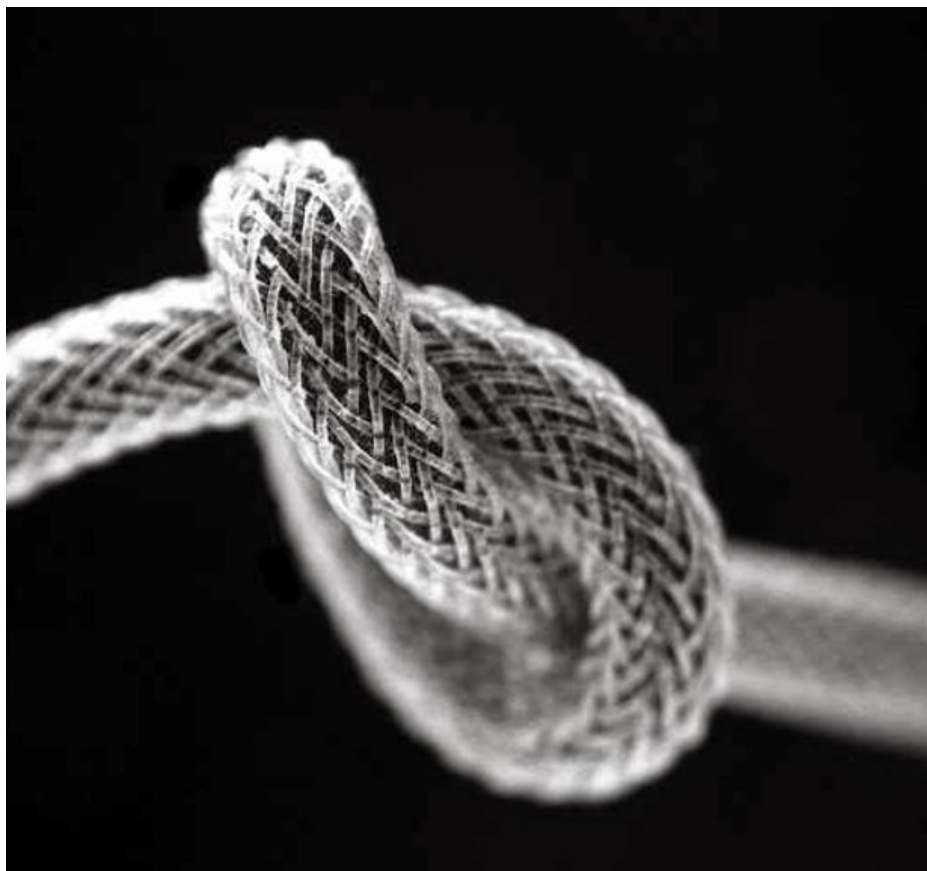
Modern medical science recognises that pain is not merely a sensory phenomenon arising from tissue damage, but a complex biopsychosocial process. Physical injury may initiate pain, yet emotional states, past experiences and cognitive interpretations significantly influence its intensity, duration and recurrence. The traditional notion that pain is the result of deeds can be scientifically understood as the cumulative impact of behavioural choices, emotional conditioning and stress-induced neurophysiological changes over time. The concept of the emotion cord symbolically represents this enduring connection between emotional experiences and pain responses.

The emotion cord is not an anatomical structure but a psychological and neurobiological construct. It refers to the persistent neural and emotional pathways formed by repeated emotional experiences such as fear, guilt, anger or unresolved trauma. From a neuroscientific perspective,

emotional experiences are encoded in interconnected brain regions, particularly the amygdala, hippocampus, prefrontal cortex and insular cortex. Recurrent emotional stress strengthens synaptic connections within these networks, creating durable neural circuits that influence perception, decision-making and physiological responses. Over time, these reinforced pathways form what can metaphorically be described as an emotion cord, linking emotional history with present pain. This explains why emotional pain and physical pain share overlapping neural mechanisms, allowing emotional distress to manifest as bodily discomfort.

The philosophical assertion that pain arises from deeds closely aligns with principles of behavioural and psychosomatic medicine. Deeds, in this context, can be understood as lifestyle choices, habitual emotional reactions, coping strategies and recurring thought patterns. Chronic stress, for example, often develops from prolonged maladaptive responses to life events. This sustained stress activates the hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal axis, leading to continuous cortisol release, immune dysregulation, systemic inflammation and increased pain sensitivity. Poor emotional regulation, unhealthy habits and negative cognitive appraisals gradually translate into biological changes that predispose individuals to chronic pain conditions. Pain, therefore, emerges not as a form of punishment, but as a physiological consequence of cumulative emotional and behavioural processes.

Psychological research has firmly established that pain perception is subjective and strongly modulated by cognitive and emotional factors. Attention plays a crucial role, as excessive focus on pain intensifies its perception, while distraction can significantly reduce its severity. Interpretation is equally important; catastrophic thinking amplifies pain signals through cortical feedback mechanisms, reinforcing suffering. Emotional states such as anxiety and depression lower pain thresholds by alter-



ing neurotransmitter systems, particularly serotonin, dopamine and norepinephrine. Memory and conditioning further contribute to pain persistence, as past painful experiences train the nervous system to anticipate pain even in the absence of ongoing tissue damage, thereby strengthening the emotion cord. Social and cultural influences also shape pain experiences, as social support has been shown to mitigate pain, whereas isolation and loneliness exacerbate it, highlighting the interpersonal dimension of pain psychology.

Neurobiological studies using functional imaging techniques reveal that emotional pain activates the same brain regions involved in physical pain, espe-

cially the anterior cingulate cortex and the insula. This neural overlap explains why emotional wounds such as grief, loss or social rejection often produce real physical sensations, including chest tightness, headaches or gastrointestinal discomfort. Chronic emotional stress can sensitise nociceptive pathways through a process known as central sensitisation, in which the nervous system remains in a prolonged state of heightened reactivity, amplifying even minor stimuli into significant pain experiences.

Effective pain management therefore requires addressing both physical and emotional components, essentially weakening or "cutting" the emotion cord. Cognitive Behavioural Therapy plays a key role

by restructuring maladaptive beliefs, reducing pain catastrophising and diminishing the emotional reinforcement of pain pathways. Mindfulness and meditation practices help downregulate amygdala activity and strengthen prefrontal cortical control, thereby reducing emotional reactivity and perceived pain intensity. Emotional processing and acceptance are equally important, as acknowledging emotions without suppression prevents their conversion into somatic symptoms and allows the nervous system to recalibrate. Lifestyle modifications, including regular physical activity, adequate sleep and balanced nutrition, improve neurochemical balance and enhance resilience against pain. Social connection, a sense of purpose and compassion activate reward and bonding circuits in the brain, counteracting pain-related neural networks and promoting healing.

Emerging research in medical science suggests that emotional retraining can rewire pain pathways through neural plasticity. Integrative approaches that combine medical treatment, psychological intervention and contemplative practices are increasingly redefining pain management, shifting the focus toward prevention, emotional literacy and long-term well-being.

The concept of the emotion cord provides a powerful metaphor for understanding the enduring link between emotions, behaviour and pain. Scientifically, pain can be viewed as a learned and modifiable experience shaped by neural plasticity and psychological processes. When pain is understood not as an isolated symptom but as a meaningful signal of emotional and behavioural imbalance, new pathways for holistic healing emerge. Interpreting pain as a consequence of deeds—through lifestyle choices, emotional regulation and cognition—empowers individuals to actively participate in their recovery and cultivate sustained physical and mental health.

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

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AIO, Shabir Ahmad Honoured for Dedicated Public Service

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, JAN 26: Mr. Shabir Ahmad, Assistant Information Officer in the Department of Information, was felicitated by Deputy Chief Minister Surinder Choudhary during the 77th Republic Day celebrations held at Bakshi Stadium here on Sunday, in recognition of his years of dedicated service, integrity and commitment to public duty.

The honour was conferred in the presence of senior civil

and police officers, public representatives and a large gathering of people who attended the main Republic Day function. Mr. Ahmad was acknowledged for his sustained contribution to public communication and his adherence to professional ethics while discharging official responsibilities.

Speaking on the occasion, the Deputy Chief Minister lauded the role of government officials who work with dedication to strengthen governance and



ensure effective public outreach. He said recognising such officers not only acknowledges individual merit but also motivates others in public service to perform their duties with sincerity and accountability.

The Republic Day Function at Bakshi Stadium featured a ceremonial march-past, cultural programmes and the presentation of awards to officials and citizens for exemplary service, marking the celebration of democratic values and national pride.

Nodal Officer For National Programmes, Cultural Education, Nazir Ahmad Felicitated on 77th Republic Day



■ HT NEWS NETWORK

BARAMULLA, JAN 26: The In-Charge Cultural Education Wing, Baramulla, and Nodal Officer for National Programmes, Nazir Ahmad, was felicitated by the District Administration Baramulla on the auspicious occasion of the 77th Republic Day, 2026, in recognition of his outstanding dedication, exemplary hard work, and unwavering commitment towards the promotion of education and cultural activities.

The honour was bestowed upon him in appreciation of his tireless efforts in planning, coordinating, and successfully

implementing various cultural and national programmes across the district. His proactive leadership and meticulous supervision have played a pivotal role in fostering patriotism, preserving cultural heritage, and enhancing student participation at different levels. Nazir Ahmad's consistent sincerity, strong sense of responsibility, and devotion to duty have significantly contributed to the smooth conduct of district-level events and initiatives.

The recognition by the District Administration stands as a testimony to his commendable public service and continues to inspire others in the field of education and cultural development.

Sania Manzoor Honoured with Appreciation Award



■ HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, JAN 27: Sania Manzoor, daughter of Manzoor Ahmad Lone and a resident of Thindima, was honoured with an Appreciation Award by the Tehsil Administration Kreeri on the occasion of the 77th Republic Day celebrations. The award was conferred in recognition of her outstanding achievement of winning a Silver Medal in Tennis Cricket.

Her remarkable accomplishment is a result of unwavering dedication, consistent hard work, and an exemplary sporting

spirit. Sania's success has brought immense pride to her family and the entire area, and stands as a shining example for aspiring sports persons.

The achievement is expected to inspire many young players to take up sports with passion, discipline, and determination, highlighting the importance of perseverance and commitment in achieving excellence.

It is worth mentioning that Mahir Rather played a vital role in her journey, providing guidance and support as her coach throughout this successful phase.

36TH UTLC

CS favours tech-driven measures, real time coordination to curb cyber frauds

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU, JAN 27: Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo today emphasised the need for robust technology-driven solutions, strengthened enforcement mechanisms and real-time coordination among regulators and law enforcement agencies to effectively curb cyber frauds and online financial scams.

Chairing the 36th Union Territory Level Coordination Committee (UTLCC) meeting, convened by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), Jammu, the Chief Secretary asserted that comprehensive technological interventions, coupled with stringent legal action, are imperative to safeguard the public from the menace of cyber-enabled financial frauds.

The UTLCC is a statutory coordination forum constituted by the Ministry of Finance to ensure close cooperation among regulators and enforcement agencies, curb unauthorised deposit-taking and other unregulated financial activities, and facilitate sharing of market intelligence.

The meeting was attended by the Regional Director, RBI, Jammu; Principal Secretary, Home Department; IGP Crime; Commissioner Secretary, Law; Director, Information; Director, Industries, Jammu, and other senior officials.

Senior officials including GM, RBI; Registrar of Cooperatives; Market Intelligence Unit, RBI, along with representatives of SEBI and ICAI, also participated.

Taking serious note of instances of cyber fraud and online cheating reported in the UT, the Chief Secretary directed that the strictest possible action be taken against offenders under the relevant provisions of the Banning of Unregulated Deposit Schemes (BUDS) Act, which has now been operationalised in Jammu and Kashmir.

He called upon the RBI and law enforcement agencies to

clearly define and streamline cyber regulatory protocols for swift and effective enforcement. Stressing on public awareness, the Chief Secretary directed the Department of Information and Public Relations (DIPR), J&K, to publish awareness campaigns in local newspapers and across official social media platforms, in coordination with RBI Jammu, particularly highlighting the importance of investing only in RBI-authorised and white listed entities.

The Chief Secretary further urged regulatory authorities, including the Registrar of Companies (RoC), to proactively share details of unregistered and suspicious entities with law enforcement agencies to enable timely action against repeat offenders. He also underscored the need for capacity building and sensitisation of police and defence personnel to effectively deal with financial frauds and cyber crimes.

Highlighting financial safety initiatives, Atal Dulloo stressed the importance of the Unified Lending Interface (ULI) introduced by RBI to make lending and investment processes safer and more transparent. He also called for onboarding J&K Bank on enhanced RBI safety and cyber security parameters to further strengthen the digital payments ecosystem in the UT.

The Chief Secretary reiterated the need for firm action against fraudulent mobile applications, websites, Nidhi companies and other unregistered or unregulated entities involved in duping the people of Jammu and Kashmir.

Earlier, Chandrashekhar Azad, Regional Director, RBI, Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh, apprised the meeting of various initiatives undertaken by the Reserve Bank of India to curb cyber frauds and financial crimes. He stressed the importance of a collaborative and coordinated approach

among regulators, enforcement agencies and other stakeholders.

He highlighted the launch of exclusive internet domains 'bank.in' for banks and 'fin.in' for NBFCs to prevent the creation of deceptive websites impersonating financial institutions. He also informed that, as per RBI guidelines, regulated entities are using verified customer care numbers published on the Sanchar Saathi portal, with '1600xx' series for service calls and '140xx' series for promotional calls, to curb fraudulent communication.

The meeting was further apprised about the Digital Payments Intelligence Platform (DPIIP) being developed by RBI as a national-level, real-time fraud intelligence-sharing system connecting banks, payment service providers, regulators and law enforcement agencies. Moreover it was divulged that a Mule Hunter AI, a system-wide platform to identify and flag mule accounts used for illegal fund transfers, has already been implemented in 23 banks.

Addressing the growing menace of fake digital lending applications, it was given out that RBI has operationalised a Digital Lending Apps (DLA) directory on its website, listing only those apps deployed by RBI-regulated entities. The revised Digital Lending Directions issued in May 2025, which lay down strict norms on recovery practices, data privacy and grievance redressal was also highlighted during this meeting.

It was further revealed that RBI has significantly enhanced its financial awareness initiatives, including conducting 67 awareness programmes across districts in 2025, intensified outreach under the "RBI Kehta Hai" campaign, and dissemination of fraud alerts and safe financial practices through various government departments.

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

PUBLIC NOTICE

It is hereby notified for general information that Rahil Ahmad Bhat, S/o Nazir Ahmad Bhat, R/o Kowari Gam, Tehsil Achabal, District Anantnag has applied for issuance of RBA Certificate.

Any person having any objection in this regard may submit the same along with documentary proof in the office of the undersigned within 07 days from the date of publication of this notice. After expiry of the said period, no objection shall be entertained.

By Order
Naib Tehsildar, Achabal

GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU AND KASHMIR OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER, MECHANICAL IRRIGATION DIVISION SRINAGAR, NEAR J&K BANK(ZALDAGAR)

Telefax No. 0194-2952696 e.mail Id: to-exenmidsrinagar@jk.gov.in

Sub: Extension in bidding time for e-NIT No. 34 OF 2025-26, Dated: 22-12-2025 for below mentioned work: - Revamping / Modernization of Marval Lift Irrigation Scheme, Pulwama.

Ref: JK Government official e-Procurement portal Tender ID No.: - 2025_IFC_298835_1

EXTENSION NOTICE - 3

Due to No response the tender deadline is hereby extended by 12 days. The critical dates are extended as under:

Bid submission/ Document download / sale end Date	09/02/2026 at 1400 hrs
Date and time of Bid opening	10/02/2026 at 1200 hrs

Rest of the terms and conditions shall remain un-altered as laid down in the original e-NIT.

No. MIDS/Ts/5055-77
Dated: 27-01-2026

Sd/- Executive Engineer,
Mechanical Irrigation Division Srinagar

DIPK: 10393/25 | Dated: 27-01-2026

GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU AND KASHMIR Office Of the Executive Engineer JS-PHE Deptt. Rural Water Supply Division, Ganderbal/Srinagar

H.Q: Duderhama Ganderbal.

e - mail: phe-rwsgbl@jk.gov.in | Phone: 0194 - 2416292

Reference: This Office S/T e- NIT No: - 37 / JS-PHE/RWSD/Civil of 2025-26, issued Under No: JS-PHE/RWSD/Corrs/9175 - 9200, dated: 21.01.2026, Works figuring at S.No: 02, bearing Tender id. 2026_PHE_301096_1

EXTENSION NOTICE - I

Due to poor response, the bid submission end and bid opening (online) dates for the work advertised/ published vide this office above referred S/T e-NIT No. & date bearing tender ID mentioned above are hereby extended & re-fixed as under:

Last date of submission of Bids online 30.01.2026 up to 02:00 p.m.

Date of opening of bids online 30.01.2026 at 03:30 p.m.

All other terms and conditions of the e- NIT/work shall remain unchanged.

No. JS-PHE/ RWSD/ Corrs. / 9285 - 9309 | Dated: 27-01-2026

Sd/- (Er. Fayaz Ahmad Bhat)
Executive Engineer JS-PHE, RWSD Ganderbal/Sgr

DIPK: 10387/25 | Dated: 27-01-2026

Public Notice

Whereas, I/We Nissar ahmad wani S/O Manzoor ahmad wani Proprietor of the Excursion Agency/Travel Agency have applied in Tourism Department for change in location of my Excursion Agency/ Travel Agency under the name and style SUNWAY KASHMIR TOUR AND TRAVELS from Alustang Hazratbal to Mulphaq, Burzahama, Srinagar as per Section 39 of the J&K Registration of Tourist trade act 1978/2011 Whereas, the said excursion agency/ travel agency is registered with the Department of Tourism, Kashmir under the name and style" SUNWAY KASHMIR TOUR AND TRAVELS in the name of Mr./Mrs./Ms NISSAR AHMAD WANI S/O Manzoor ahmad wani R/O MULPHAQ BURZAHAMA SRINAGAR bearing registration No. JKEA00002289 and the same is renewed upto 31-12-2025 Whereas, I/We have submitted photographs of office both inside and outside and Photocopy of Registration Certificate; Before considering my request for change in location of my Excursion Agency/Travel Agency SUNWAY KASHMIR TOUR AND TRAVELS FROM ALUSTANG HAZRATBAL, SRINAGAR TO MULPHAQ, BURZAHAMA, SRINAGAR is considered, the matter is hereby notified for information of General Public/Financial Institutions/ Banks/ Development Authorities/ PHE Department/ Electric Department that in case of any objection, the same should reach the office of Deputy Director Tourism, Registration within a period of 07 days from the date of publication of this notice. No objections beyond a period of 07 days will be entertained and my request for the same will be considered under rules, after submission of requisite documents.

Dated 26/01/2026

Government Of Jammu & Kashmir

Office of the Naib Tehsildar, Shangus

PUBLIC NOTICE

It is notified for the information of the general public that Shakir Ahmad Bhat, S/o Gulam Rasool Bhat, R/o Khull Chohar Brah, Tehsil Shangus, District Anantnag, has applied for issuance of RBA Certificate from this office.

Any person having any objection, if any, may submit the same along with documentary proof before the undersigned within 07 (seven) days from the date of publication of this notice. After expiry of the stipulated period, no objection shall be entertained.

Sd/- Naib Tehsildar Shangus

إِنَّا لِلّٰهِ وَإِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ



In Loving Memory of Mohammad Shafi Dar

With deep sorrow, we announce the passing of
Mohammad Shafi Dar on 26th January 2026.

Spirited, active, respected and adored by all, he was a
dedicated family man and a pillar of our community.

His Rasm e Chahurum will be observed on 29th
January, Thursday at 10:00 AM at the ancestral
graveyard, Ram Bagh, Srinagar.

Bereaved: Ghulam Qadir Dar, Dr Aijaz Muzamil, Sons
in Law, Brothers, Dar, Mir, Baba and Zam Zam Families

Phulkari reflects the soul of India's patriotism: Sat Sharma

Sat Sharma releases patriotic video song "Phulkari" at party headquarters

HT NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU, JAN 27: BJP Jammu & Kashmir President and Rajya Sabha Member of Parliament Sat Sharma, CA, along with Media Incharge Dr. Pardeep Mahotra, senior leaders Thakur Narain Singh and Jeet Angral, and Co-Convenor of BJP Sanskriti, Art & Culture Cell Sahil Mahajan today released a patriotic video song titled "Phulkari" at the BJP headquarters, Trikuta Nagar, Jammu.

The video song, sung by renowned singer Raahul Kumar, is a soulful tribute to the supreme sacrifice made by Indian soldiers who put the nation above personal happiness. The song narrates the emotional journey of

a soldier who sacrifices his family, love, and personal dreams to serve the nation at the borders, reflecting the true spirit of patriotism and duty. Music has been composed by Raahul Kumar, with Karan Menia as Mix Master. The lyrics are penned by Deep, while the video is directed by Ankush. Ravi Bhatti and Shweta Manhas feature as lead models. Makeup was done by Muskan (Ramgarh), with special thanks to Dr. V. Kaith (Kaith Music Factory) and Birendra Kumar (Veer) for their support.

Addressing the media, Sat Sharma said that Phulkari is not just a song, but a heartfelt tribute to our brave soldiers who stand guard at our borders



while the nation sleeps in peace. It powerfully depicts the emotional sacrifices made by our

jawans, who often leave behind their families and loved ones for the sake of the motherland.

Such creative efforts help strengthen national consciousness and remind especially the

younger generation of the true cost of our freedom and security. He lauded the entire cre-

ative team for presenting patriotism in such an emotionally engaging manner.

Dr. Pardeep Mahotra said that this video song is a meaningful initiative that blends art, culture, and nationalism. He said that through 'Phulkari', the pain, pride, and sacrifice of a soldier's life have been beautifully portrayed. BJP has always encouraged cultural expressions that promote national unity, patriotism, and respect for our armed forces, he added. Sahil Mahajan said that the Sanskriti, Art & Culture Cell of BJP is committed to promoting art that carries a strong national message. He added that 'Phulkari' is a sincere attempt to honor our soldiers through music and visual storytelling.

Omar govt exposed of its double face: BJP

BJP plays Omar Abdullah govt for gross failure in snowfall management, accuse it of regional bias

HT NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU, JAN 27: Bharatiya Janata Party spokespersons Dr. Abhijeet Singh Jasrotia and Dr. Hari Dutt Shishu, along with Dr. Pardeep Mahotra, Media Incharge BJP, strongly criticized the Omar Abdullah-led government for its utter failure to provide relief to the public and stranded tourists amid heavy snowfall across Jammu & Kashmir.

Addressing a joint press conference at party headquarters, Trikuta Nagar, Jammu, the BJP leaders accused the government of adopting a biased, selective, and apathetic approach in addressing public grievances.



Launching a scathing attack on the Chief Minister, Dr. Abhijeet Singh Jasrotia said it is a matter of deep concern and shock that while Omar Abdullah is being seen enjoying snow scooter rides in the snow-clad tourist resort of Gulmarg, he appears completely indifferent to the misery and suffering of people living in the higher reaches of the Jammu province. He pointed out that vast areas including upper reaches of Poonch, Kishtwar, Ramban, Bafliaz, Bani, Lohai Malhar and several other regions remain totally cut off from the rest of the Union Territory.

Dr. Jasrotia highlighted that these areas are facing a complete breakdown of essential services, with no transportation facilities, no mobile connectivity, and no access to basic healthcare, forcing residents to endure extreme hardship in harsh weather conditions. He alleged that the entire administrative machinery has been diverted to select areas only, exposing the government's regional apathy and discriminatory mindset. "Does the Omar Abdullah government represent only one region?" Dr. Jasrotia questioned, asserting that such governance reflects a complete failure of leadership and responsibility.

Addressing the media, Dr. Hari Dutt Shishu reminded the Chief Minister of the principles of "Raj Dharma" upheld by former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee, who believed in just, fair, and equal governance for all. He urged Omar Abdullah to learn from Vajpayee's ideals and govern Jammu and Kashmir without discrimination. He said that both regions of the Union Territory must be treated as the Chief Minister's "two eyes," and appealed to him to rise above petty politics when dealing with humanitarian crises.

Dr. Shishu further stated that while the Chief Minister's concern for Gulmarg and his personal presence there with men and machinery may be understandable, it is unacceptable that tourists stranded in Patnitop continue to suffer due to road disconnection, with no effective steps taken to alleviate their distress. He termed such selective governance as unjust and insensitive. He asserted that it is unbecoming of a Chief Minister to act based on regional, religious, or any other ulterior considerations, especially during times of natural calamity, and demanded immediate, equitable, and effective intervention across all affected regions.

J&K BJP celebrates 77th Republic Day with Patriotic fervour across Union Territory

HT NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU, JAN 27: The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), Jammu & Kashmir, celebrated the 77th Republic Day of India with great enthusiasm, patriotic zeal, and a strong commitment to the nation across the Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir.

Marking the historic occasion, BJP leaders and party workers unfurled the National Flag at prominent localities, chowks, party offices, and key public places. The celebrations were accompanied by spirited patriotic slogans, the singing of national songs, and the distribution of sweets, reflecting the collective pride and joy of the occasion.

At the BJP Headquarters, Trikuta Nagar, Jammu, the National Flag was unfurled by BJP J&K President and Rajya Sabha MP Sat Sharma, CA, along with General Secretary (Organization) Ashok Koul, General Secretaries Baldev Singh Billawaria and Go-

pal Mahajan, MLA Vikram Randhawa, District President Naresh Singh Jasrotia, and other senior party leaders.

Similarly, at the BJP Office, Kachi Chawni, Jammu, MP Ghulam Ali Khatana, MLA Arvind Gupta, District President Rajesh Gupta, and senior BJP leaders unfurled the National Flag.

At City Chowk, Jammu, the tricolour was unfurled by MP Jugal Kishore Sharma, MLA Yudhvir Sethi, along with other party leaders.

Extending greetings to the people of the nation on Republic Day, Sat Sharma said that India stands tall as the world's largest and most vibrant democracy, guided by the visionary framework of the Indian Constitution. He emphasized that the Constitution not only guarantees civil rights but also instills a sense of duty, discipline, and national responsibility among citizens. He urged everyone to reaffirm their commitment to



democratic values and actively contribute towards building a

strong, self-reliant, and developed India.

Recalling the legacy of India's freedom fighters and national heroes, Sat Sharma said that the sacrifices of Maharana Pratap, Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj, Guru Gobind Singh Ji, Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose, Bhagat Singh, and countless others continue to inspire the nation. He stressed the need to honour their sacrifices by safeguarding India's unity, sovereignty, cultural heritage, and national pride.

Speaking on the occasion, Ashok Koul said that the Bharatiya Janata Party celebrates Republic Day with a deep sense of responsibility and devotion to the nation. He called upon citizens to celebrate the day by reaffirming faith in the constitutional values of justice, liberty, equality, and national unity. He further emphasized the importance of nurturing patriotism among the younger generation so that they grow up as responsible, disciplined, and nation-first citizens.

GMC Jammu Surgeon demonstrates innovative procedure at Spine surgeons' conference

HT NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU, JAN 27: Fixation of spine injuries needs adequately trained manpower as well as state of the art equipment. The odontoid fracture fixation requires the highest precision and utmost care because of the structure being very close to the brain and vital centres, controlling functioning of the body.

Bringing pride to Government Medical College Jammu and department of orthopaedics, Dr Bias Dev Associate professor presented a very cost effective self-invented procedure, in the category of innovations, at the annual conference of spine surgeons recently held at Pune. The GMC Jammu Surgeon also presented a paper on results of lumbar discectomy with fenestration, a minimally invasive technique for relieving symptoms arising out of prolapsed intervertebral lumbar disc disease. Presentations at such professional meetings and conferences bring recognition to the



institution's work at the national level.

It is pertinent to mention that the GMC Jammu's department of orthopaedics is offering all kinds of spine services and has become a prominent spine centre of north India in Govt. sector.

The department tackles all kinds of spine ailments under the visionary leadership of Dr Sanjeev Gupta, Head of the department and unrelenting support from the Department of

Anaesthesia, Department of Radiology, Principal, Dr. Ashutosh Gupta and higher administration from time to time for meeting the logistic challenges.

Dr. Mohd Farooq Butt, Associate Professor, Dr. Fareed Mallik, Associate Professor, Dr. Navdeep Singh Consultant and Dr. Akhil Gupta, Consultant also attended the conference and actively participated in the deliberations on the recent advances in endoscopic procedures.

ADC reviews status of essential services in Baderwah

HT NEWS NETWORK

BHADERWAH, JAN 27: Additional District Commissioner (ADC) Bhaderwah, Sunil Kumar Bhutyal on Tuesday reviewed the status of essential services, including healthcare and Power Supply Scenario in the Sub-Division.

The ADC visited Sub District Hospital and reviewed the stock and supply position of medicines, availability of medical staff and sanitation conditions.

The Block Medical Officer (BMO) briefed the ADC about the overall functioning of the hospital, patient inflow and healthcare services being provided.

Later, the ADC visited the Sub-Transmission Line Section, where he assessed the status of power infrastructure and related services. He interacted with the officials and issued directions to ensure uninterrupted power supply and timely redressal of public grievances.

The ADC directed all concerned departments to work with dedication and ensure efficient, transparent and people-friendly delivery of public services.

DC Poonch visits children homes on Republic Day

HT NEWS NETWORK

POONCH, JAN 27: On the occasion of Republic Day, the Deputy Commissioner, Ashok Sharma visited children homes Parisha, Palash and Government Hostels for Girls (Pahari and Gujjar) to exchange the greetings of the day with the inmates.

The visit was a courtesy outreach during which the Deputy Commissioner shared sweets, extended warm greetings and interacted with the inmates to understand their issues and concerns. He assured them that genuine issues raised would be addressed on priority.

During the visit, District Social Welfare Officer, Khalil A. Bandy briefed the Deputy Commissioner about the facilities available, issues faced by the inmates and the measures taken by the department for their welfare and well-being.

The Deputy Commissioner was accompanied by ADC, ACR and other officers of the district administration.



India on path to develop two nanometer chips: Vaishnaw

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, JAN 27: Minister of Electronics and Information Technology Ashwini Vaishnaw on Tuesday expressed confidence that as the country moves towards 2029, and the Semicon 2.0 (second phase of country's semiconductor mission to expand chip making) matures, India will become a major player in the semiconductor industry.

The minister shared that the country has mapped out the path from going to 28 nanometer to 7 nanometer, 7 to 3 nanometer, adding that the country has studied as to how Taiwan, Japan, South Korea and other nations have taken

forward this journey regarding chip building, and after studying all of this, also based on the talent India has, the nation has chalked out a path towards 2 nano meters.

Vaishnaw exuded confidence, claiming that the world now believes that by 2035 India will be amongst most important semiconductor nations in the world.

Speaking on the sidelines of an event in New Delhi on Tuesday, Vaishnaw stated that the country is going to create its own Intellectual Property in six systems including Radio Frequency, networking, power, sensor and memory under its semiconductor mission.

Vaishnaw said that upon completion of four years of the



country's semiconductor mission, around ten projects are under development, while production on four is going to begin in this year.

He also shared that so far 24 project startups that have come forward in the domain have designed semiconductor chips, while in over 300 institutions, the students have been imparted skills and training for designing semiconductor chips.

Vaishnaw, who was addressed a gathering of chip designs startups here, said that the conversion is taking place, and the country is becoming not just a service provider, but also a product nation. UNI

Process On To Impeach Justice Varma, Govt Awaiting Probe Panel Report: Kiren Rijiju

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, JAN 27: The process to impeach Allahabad High Court judge Yashwant Varma is underway and the government is awaiting the report of a three-member committee set up by Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla to probe charges against him, Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju said on



Tuesday.

Birla set up the committee on August 12 last year to probe corruption charges against Justice Varma after admitting a multi-party notice for his removal.

Justice Varma was repatriated from the Delhi High Court to the Allahabad High Court after burnt wads of currency notes were found at his official residence here on March 14. Asked whether the matter will be taken up before the upcoming Budget session of Parliament beginning Wednesday, Rijiju refused to comment further on the issue.

"As per the procedure, the matter has been referred to the committee constituted by the Speaker with the consent of the House and the process is on," he told reporters.

"While the committee is discharging its duty, we are waiting for the report to come. Before that, I cannot pass any comment," Rijiju said.

The inquiry committee comprises Supreme Court judge Justice Aravind Kumar, Madras High Court Chief Justice Manindra Mohan Shrivastava and senior Karnataka High Court advocate B V Acharya.

After referring to relevant laws and judgements of the Supreme Court, the Delhi High Court chief justice found that the charges against Justice Varma were of serious nature and followed it up with the "in-house procedure".

Officials aware of the procedure to appoint and remove Supreme Court and high court judges pointed out that while defending his case before lawmakers in any House of Parliament, Justice Varma can announce that he is quitting and his verbal statement will be considered as his resignation.

If Justice Varma decides to resign, he will be entitled for pension and other benefits entitled to a retired high court judge. But if he is removed by Parliament, he will be deprived of pension and other benefits, the officials noted.

Campaigning kick off for Japan's snap general election

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

TOKYO, JAN 27: Campaigning for Japan's Feb. 8 snap general election officially kicked off across the country on Tuesday with all 465 seats in the House of Representatives up for contest.

The primary focus of the election is whether the ruling coalition of the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) and the Japan Innovation Party (JIP) will secure a majority and allow the administration of Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi to continue, or whether the opposition will expand its strength and block that outcome. Of the 465 lower house seats, 289 will be elected from single-member districts and 176 through proportional representation in 11 regional blocs. National broadcaster NHK said more

than 1,200 candidates are expected to run. The NHK predicts that parties will wage heated debates during the campaign over the Takaichi government's response to inflation, as well as foreign and security policies.

The LDP previously held 199 seats in the lower house, and its coalition ally, JIP, held 34. Takaichi, also president of the LDP, said during a party leaders' debate on Monday that she would step down immediately if the ruling bloc fails to secure a majority in the upcoming election. The new opposition party Centrist Reform Alliance, formally launched earlier this month, has become Japan's main opposition party with 165 lower house lawmakers. The new alliance between the Constitutional Democratic Party of Japan and Komeito, a former

ally of the LDP, aims to defeat the conservative ruling bloc in the upcoming contest.

On Jan. 23, Takaichi dissolved the House of Representatives for a snap election, marking the first dissolution at the start of a regular parliamentary session in 60 years. The decision has drawn criticism for giving voters little time to assess competing policy proposals, with the campaign period lasting just 12 days -- the shortest in Japan's postwar history.

Opposition parties have also slammed Takaichi's plan, saying she is putting political considerations ahead of parliament's enactment of an initial budget for fiscal 2026 starting in April, despite her pledge to prioritize policy implementation.

US President Donald Trump hails return of final Israeli hostage's remains

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

WASHINGTON, JAN 27: US President Donald Trump, celebrating the return of the final deceased Israeli hostage from Gaza, hailed the recovery effort, expressing his disbelief at a task he thought impossible.

"Just recovered the last Hostage body in GAZA. Thus, got back ALL 20 of the living Hostages, and ALL of the Dead! AMAZING JOB! Most thought of it as an impossible thing to do. Congratulations to my great team of Champions!!!" he wrote on Truth Social.

Trump's top aide and son-in-law Jared Kushner explaining the retrieval, hailed the coordination between the US, Israel, Egypt, Turkey, Qatar and "many cooperative Gazans" who helped locate and facilitate the return of all the deceased hostages from Gaza. "Coordination and trust were built between individuals and organisations where none previously existed. This produced tangible results," Kushner wrote in an X post.

SC pulls up BCI over denial of honorarium, travel facilities for retired judges overseeing bar council elections

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, JAN 27: The Supreme Court on Tuesday questioned the Bar Council of India (BCI) over its failure to provide adequate honorarium and travel allowances to retired High Court judges appointed to monitor State Bar Council elections.

A Bench comprising Chief Justice of India Surya Kant, Justice R. Mahadevan, and Justice Joymalya Bagchi took up the issue following an oral mentioning by senior advocate V. Giri, a member of the High-Powered Election Supervisory Committee constituted by the Court.

Giri submitted that the honorarium payable to members of the High-Powered Election Committees must be commensurate with their stature, as many of them are former Chief Justices or judges of High Courts.

He informed the Bench that when this concern was raised before the BCI, it responded that such payments would be "too much" and not feasible.

Seeking the Court's intervention, Giri requested that either appropriate directions be issued or that Justice (ret'd.) Sudhanshu Dhulia is authorised to take necessary steps.

He also placed before the Bench the BCI's response addressed to Justice Dhulia.

In addition, Giri flagged that the BCI had constituted a separate committee for conducting Rajasthan Bar Council elections on the grounds that Rajasthan was not mentioned in the Supreme Court's order dated November 18, 2024, by which High-Powered Election Committees were constituted.

He submitted that the move was contrary to both the letter and spirit of the Court's directions and pointed out that the committee had already notified the elections.

Questioning the BCI's stance, the Bench asked its counsel why Rajasthan was excluded and why a separate committee was constituted without informing the Court.

The Supreme Court directed the BCI to explain by the next day why it had taken such a step.

The Bench also expressed strong displeasure over the denial of travel allowances to committee members. "You fixed the election fee on the ground that it would generate sufficient funds for conducting elections. Now you are telling retired judges that you cannot pay them honorarium or travel allowances. What will they do? Do they have their own aircraft?" the Chief Justice remarked.

Giri further informed the Court that committee members were required to make travel bookings at their own expense and that the facilities provided were not befitting former High Court judges, let alone former Chief Justices.

He submitted that the BCI's proposal was only for reimbursement, which would take considerable time.

While the BCI's counsel stated that an affidavit proposing payments had been filed, the Bench asked the Council to file a detailed response on both issues by the next day, cautioning it against inviting coercive orders.

The Supreme Court had earlier, on September 24 last year, directed the conduct of elections in Bar Councils where polls were due.

Subsequently, on November 18, it constituted High-Powered Election Committees headed by former High Court Chief Justices and comprising former High Court judges to oversee each State Bar Council election. UNI

SC moots auction of offenders' assets to ensure compensation for acid attack victims

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, JAN 27: The Supreme Court today suggested the adoption of stricter and more deterrent measures to address acid attack cases, observing that offenders' properties could be attached and auctioned if they are unable to compensate victims.

A Bench, comprising Chief Justice of India (CJI) Surya Kant and Justice Joymalya Bagchi, was hearing a public interest litigation seeking comprehensive directions on the handling of acid attack cases.

Emphasising the gravity of such offences, the Bench underscored that punishments must be severe enough to act as an effective deterrent.

The Court observed that compensation to victims is non-negotiable and must be ensured even if it requires the sale of the offender's assets. "If the accused cannot pay

compensation, why not attach all assets and then auction them to pay off the victim?" the CJI remarked during the hearing.

Stating that acid attacks demand a response beyond routine legal consequences, the Bench noted that conventional reformative theories may not be adequate in such cases.

"Some extraordinary punitive measures are needed beyond the letter of the law. Unless the action is so painful for the accused, it will not work," the CJI observed.

The Court directed all States and union Territories to place on record comprehensive data on acid attack cases across the country. It asked the governments to submit year-wise details of reported incidents, the status of charge-sheets, the number of cases decided, and those pending.

Further, the Bench sought victim-specific information, including

academic qualifications, employment status, marital status, medical treatment undergone, expenses incurred or likely to be incurred, and details of rehabilitation schemes, if any, extended to acid attack survivors.

The Court granted four weeks' time for compliance.

During the proceedings, the Bench reiterated that acid attacks are offences of extreme seriousness, comparable to other grave crimes against women, and warrant stringent legal responses.

The CJI also asked the union government to examine whether legislative intervention or legal reforms were necessary to address acid attacks more effectively.

Addressing Additional Solicitor General Archana Pathak Dave, the CJI observed, "Think of some legislative intervention... this is not less serious than dowry death also." UNI

India-EU FTA underscores major shift in regional power dynamics besides boosting economic ties

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, JAN 27: The historic Free Trade Agreement (FTA) between India and the 27-nation European union (EU) is not just a deal that will immensely benefit both sides; it also underscores a major shift in regional power dynamics by going beyond traditional commerce to create a strategic "Third Pole" in the US-China-dominated global economy.

(In international relations, the strategic "Third Pole" is used to describe an emerging global power, particularly India, acting as a balancer in a multipolar world. In other words, India is emerging as a third, independent pole to avoid over-reliance on a US-China (G2) binary framework.)

For India, the deal, described as "mother of all deals," provides a huge alternative market to offset the impact of US tariffs and the economic and diplomatic onslaught by the Trump administration. For the EU, it is a cornerstone of its China strategy, aimed at reducing industrial and technological dependence on Beijing.

By linking the world's largest single market of 27 countries with India, the fastest-growing major economy in the world, the FTA challenges US-led trade norms and cements India's role as a leader of the Global South. It signals that both India and the EU can pursue deep integration without needing to choose between a US-led or China-led economic order.

The Security and Defence Partnership that was formally signed between the two sides after the 16th India-EU Summit here on Tuesday, integrates India into European Defence supply chains, particularly in areas like artillery, drones, and maritime security. It also offers the EU a link to the Indo-Pacific, moving Europe from a peripheral player to a central stakeholder in the region's maritime and economic stability.

According to a joint Statement issued after the 16th India-EU Summit here, the "historic deal is a milestone in the India-EU Strategic Partnership" that will significantly enhance bilateral trade and investment ties, drive shared prosperity, strengthen

resilient and diversified supply chains, and support sustainable and inclusive growth.

The Joint Statement described the signing of the Security and Defence Partnership as the first such overarching Defence and security framework between the two sides that will deepen ties in the domains of maritime security, defence industry and technology, cyber and hybrid threats, space, and counter terrorism, among others. The two sides also launched negotiations on a Security of Information Agreement that will facilitate the exchange of classified information and pave the way for stronger cooperation in areas related to security and defence.

Even though both India and the EU described the FTA as a "landmark" Agreement and "mother of all deals," major economic powers, the United States and China, see it as a threat to their economic dominance. The US has reacted with anger and indignation.

US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent said that by opening trade with India, Europe is indirectly

financing the Russia-Ukraine war. The US argues that Europe continues to buy refined fuel from India made from Russian crude oil.

The US is clearly miffed that both India and the EU finalised the FTA even as India-US trade negotiations remain stalled. Some US officials view it as a "declaration of independence" by two major partners in a world of trade fragmentation.

China sees the FTA as a challenge to its economic dominance and said Beijing is monitoring it closely. China is concerned because the India-EU FTA could cause a significant shift of European investment, production, and R&D away from China to India. This means a huge financial loss to China worth hundreds of billions of Euros annually. Beijing also sees the FTA as a dent in the EU's dependence on Chinese critical technologies.

Pakistan views the FTA as India's growing economic might. A stronger economy, coupled with the Strategic Defence Partnership, is viewed by Islamabad as a major boost to India's Defence capabilities.

Also, Pakistan sees it as a

challenge to its trade status with the EU.

Pakistan, which has duty-free access to the EU under the GSP scheme, fears that the FTA will diminish its comparative advantage over India in key sectors like textiles, leather, and apparel.

{The EU has given Pakistan GSP (Generalised Scheme of Preferences Plus) status, granting duty-free or preferential tariffs on over 66 per cent of its tariff lines, primarily benefiting textiles and garments.

In the present global uncertainties, closer economic ties between India and the EU are more important than ever to drive growth, job creation, green transition, industrial development, and more resilient, sustainable and trustworthy supply chains.

According to the Joint Statement, leaders of both sides expressed commitment to ensuring full implementation of the FTA and tasked their respective teams to complete negotiations, at the earliest opportunity, on an Investment Protection Agreement (IPA) and on an Agreement on Geographical Indications (GIs). UNI



India Eye Clean Sweep as Dominance Marks T20I Series vs NZ

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

VISAKHAPATNAM, JAN 27: There is a certain swagger about this Indian side at the moment, and as the fourth T20 International against New Zealand approaches, that confidence has become the dominant, and viral, storyline of the series.

India have already sealed the five-match contest by winning the first three games, but more than the results, it is the manner of their cricket that has caught the eye.

Under head coach Gautam Gambhir and captain Suryakumar Yadav, this team has played with the sort of fearless intent that makes opponents second-guess their plans even before a ball is

bowled. It is cricket played with clarity of thought, sharp execution, and, importantly, the belief that no target is too big and no situation too difficult.

At the heart of this narrative is Abhishek Sharma. The young opener has batted as if he has been given a simple instruction: see ball, hit ball, and hit it hard. His 84 off 35 balls in Nagpur and the breathtaking 68 off just 20 deliveries in Guwahati were not reckless assaults but calculated aggression—the kind that puts the bowling side on the back foot inside the first three overs. In old-fashioned terms, he has taken the game away early, and that has been priceless for India.

Captain Suryakumar Yadav's return to

form has added another layer to the story. After a lean period earlier in 2025, he has looked every bit the batter who can change a match in the space of two overs.

His ability to find gaps where none seem to exist has once again reminded everyone why he remains such a vital cog in India's T20 plans. Ishan Kishan's comeback innings in Raipur, played with freedom and confidence, has further highlighted the depth in India's batting reserves.

What has perhaps pleased the Indian think-tank the most is the balance of the side. The middle order, with Shivam Dube, Rinku Singh, and Hardik Pandya, has done just enough without being flashy, while the bowlers have operated

like a well-drilled unit.

Jasprit Bumrah has led with control and intelligence, Arshdeep Singh has provided left-arm variety, and the spinners have used Indian conditions with maturity rather than mystery.

For New Zealand, the story has been very different. After a fine showing in the ODI series, they have struggled to match India's intensity in the T20 format.

Glenn Phillips has fought hard, and skipper Mitchell Santner has shown leadership, but T20 cricket does not allow passengers, and too many of their key players have been quiet at crucial moments. In this format, hesitation is often punished, and India have done exactly that.

As the series moves to the Dr Y.S. Rajasekhara Reddy ACA-VDCA Cricket Stadium for the fourth T20I, the match carries significance beyond another win or loss.

For India, it is about reinforcing a template ahead of a home World Cup, showing that this aggressive approach is not situational but structural. For New Zealand, it is about finding answers, and quickly. Cricket, as always, remains a great leveller, but at this moment, India look a side in tune with the demands of modern T20 cricket. If confidence counts for anything, and it usually does, then the viral storyline of this series is simple: India are not just winning, they are making a statement.



Sabalenka steamrolls into Australia Open semis

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

MELBOURNE, JAN 27: World No. 1 Aryna Sabalenka defied sweltering heat in Melbourne on Tuesday to overwhelm teenager Iva Jovic in the quarterfinals of the Australian Open.

Sabalenka took another step toward reclaiming the title she won at Melbourne Park in 2023 and 2024.

There were moments in the tournament's first week when Sabalenka's form was patchy, but she was sharp and composed in an 89-minute 6-3, 6-0 victory over 18-year-old Jovic.

"It was a tough match. Don't look at the score, it wasn't easy at all," Sabalenka said modestly. "I'm



super happy with the win."

Temperatures were forecast to reach 45 degrees Celsius on Tuesday and had already hit 35 degrees by the start of the match.

With the roof not yet closed at Rod Laver Arena, Sabalenka's heavy ball striking kept Jovic under constant pressure. The Belarusian finished with 31 winners and seven aces.

Sabalenka is on a semifinal collision course with American rival Coco Gauff, who plays 12th seed Elina Svitolina in Tuesday night's session.

Nat Sciver-Brunt's historic WPL century powers MI-W

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

VADODARA, JAN 26: Nat Sciver-Brunt capped a landmark evening with a historic century and an all-round impact as Mumbai Indians Women defeated Royal Challengers Bengaluru Women by 15 runs in a must-win match of the Women's Premier League 2026 at the BCA Stadium, Kotambi, on Monday.

Sciver-Brunt became the first batswoman to score a hundred in WPL history, reaching the milestone in the penultimate over and acknowledging the applause with her helmet raised. Her innings was the centrepiece of Mumbai's commanding 199 for 4 after RCB-W opted to bowl.

Mumbai built steadily through the powerplay before Sciver-Brunt took control in the middle overs, repeatedly finding the boundary with sweeps, lofted drives and inventive placement.

Hayley Matthews provided ideal support with a fluent 56, the pair accelerating decisively to put the Bengaluru bowlers under sustained pressure. Late contributions, including a brisk cameo from Harmanpreet Kaur, ensured a daunting target.

The chase began disastrously for RCB-W. Shabnim Ismail struck early to remove Grace Harris, while Hayley Matthews ran through the top order, dismissing Smriti Mandhana, Georgia Voll and Radha Yadav. RCB-W slumped to 35 for 5 inside the powerplay, staring at a heavy defeat.

Wicketkeeper-batswoman Richa Ghosh then produced one of the finest counter-attacking knocks of the season. Batting with remarkable freedom, she smashed 90 off 50 balls, peppering the boundary with clean strikes down the ground and through the off side. Nadine de Klerk supported her with a lively



28, and the pair briefly revived RCB-W's hopes with an aggressive stand.

Mumbai, however, kept their composure. Amelia Kerr broke the key partnership by having de Klerk caught by Sciver-Brunt at deep mid-wicket, before returning at the death to dismiss Ghosh for a valiant 90, sealing the contest. RCB-W finished on 184 for 9 despite a late flourish that yielded 27 runs in the 19th over.

For Mumbai, Matthews was outstanding with the ball, claiming 3 for 10, while Kerr and Ismail picked up two wickets each. Sciver-Brunt also contributed with a crucial catch and tidy overs to maintain pressure during the chase.

The victory underlined Mumbai Indians Women's strong position in WPL 2026, with Sciver-Brunt's trailblazing century standing as the defining moment of a high-quality contest.

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