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SAFETY FIRST

Katra to Get India's First International Museum of Goddess, Work to Start Soon: LG Sinha

Landmark Project to Showcase Shakti Peeths, Devi Traditions and Boost Spiritual Tourism in J&K

HT NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU, JAN 31: Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Friday announced that work on the country's first-ever International Museum of Goddess will commence shortly at Katra, the base camp of the holy Mata Vaishno Devi shrine in Reasi district.

Calling the project a pioneering initiative, Sinha said the museum will be dedicated exclusively to goddesses and will feature replicas and representations of major Devi pilgrimage sites from across India. He said experts have already been roped in to design and execute the ambi-



tious project, which is envisioned as a world-class spiritual and cultural institution.

"The first International Museum of Goddess in the country is set to come up in Katra. It will be a matter of immense pride for Katra and the entire nation," the Lieutenant Governor said, adding that the project will further elevate the town's stature as a premier pilgrimage destination.

Katra, nestled in the Trikuta hills, serves as the gateway to the cave shrine of Mata Vaishno Devi and attracts nearly 80 to 90 lakh pilgrims annually from India and abroad. Officials said the proposed

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Union Budget 2026-27: Sitharaman Set to Balance Growth, Jobs and Fiscal Prudence Amid Global Uncertainty

HT NEWS DESK / AGENCIES

NEW DELHI, JAN 31: Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman will present the Union Budget for 2026-27 on February 1, becoming the first finance minister in independent India to deliver the annual financial statement on a Sunday. The Budget is expected to focus on sustaining economic growth, boosting manufacturing and job creation, while maintaining fiscal discipline amid global uncertainty and domestic revenue constraints.

As Sitharaman prepares to present her ninth consecutive Budget, she faces a challenging economic landscape shaped by volatile global markets, trade frictions with the United States, and geopolitical tensions. While India's domestic demand remains resilient and inflation has moderated, pressures persist to revive private investment, strengthen consumption, and create



employment, without derailing the government's fiscal consolidation path.

Economists expect capital expenditure to remain the cornerstone of the government's growth strategy. Increased allocations for railways, renewable energy, defence manufacturing,

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Night Temperatures Below Freezing Point Across Kashmir

HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, JAN 31: Night temperatures settled below the freezing point across Kashmir on Friday, but rose in most areas, while a 'yellow' weather warning for thunderstorms has been issued for Himachal Pradesh.

Saturday marked the beginning of 'Chillai Khurd' in Kashmir and the end of the harshest winter period.

The Meteorological Department has forecast light to moderate rain or snow, especially in the higher reaches, they said. The minimum temperature in Srinagar city settled at minus 0.1



degrees Celsius on Friday night, down from the previous

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Zero Tolerance, One Voice : India Urges Arab Nations to Unite Against Terrorism

HT NEWS DESK / AGENCIES

NEW DELHI, JAN 31: India on Saturday called for an uncompromising global consensus against terrorism, asserting that "zero tolerance" must be a universal principle, as leaders from India and 19 Arab League nations met in New Delhi to discuss the Gaza peace plan and pressing regional and global challenges.

Addressing the second India-Arab foreign ministers' meeting, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said terrorism in all its forms remains a common threat to peace

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As Forces Close In On Jaish Militants, Army Chief Reviews Counter-Terror Grid in Kishtwar

HT NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU, JAN 31: Northern Army Commander Lt Gen Pratik Sharma on Saturday undertook a comprehensive review of the counter-terrorism grid in Jammu and Kashmir's Kishtwar district amid a high-intensity operation to neutralise a group of Jaish-e-Mohammad militants holed up in the mountainous Chatroo belt.

The Army commander visited forward areas and interacted with ground commanders and troops engaged in the operation, lauding their professionalism, resilience and unwavering commitment in extremely challenging terrain and severe winter conditions. The Northern Command Headquarters said Lt

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From Orchard to Opportunity: The Quiet Revolution in Apple Farming under HADP

HT NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU, JAN 31: Horticulture is not merely an agricultural activity in J&K it is the backbone of the rural economy here. Among its many produce, apple occupies a central place, supporting lakhs of farming families and anchoring allied livelihoods across the length and breadth of the-

valley and some districts of Jammu region. Yet, despite producing apples renowned for their quality, the economic structure surrounding the crop remained constrained for decades.

Traditionally, the apple economy of Jammu & Kashmir operated within a narrow and unforgiving window. Harvest season brought urgency rather than opportunity. With limited

access to scientific grading, storage or organised marketing, fruit flooded the market in a short span, softening prices. Growers, even those producing premium-quality apples, had little say over when, where or at what value their produce would be sold.

That imbalance is being addressed through the interventions of HADP

Under the Holistic Agriculture Development Programme (HADP), being implemented by the Agriculture Production Department (APD), the apple sector is being reorganised not as a seasonal activity, but as an integrated value chain, linking planting material, orchard design, post-harvest management and

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LG Sinha Unveils 'The Battle of Hill Kaka'
A Gritty Account of Operation SARP-VINASH, Book Authored by Defence Analyst M. S. Nazki

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Aijaz Asad inspects RDD works for infrastructure strengthening at Kalidhar Mandir Resai

Sanctions Yatri Shed, CSCs for convenience of devotees

HT NEWS NETWORK

REASI, JAN 31: Secretary, Rural Development Department and Panchayati Raj, Mohammad Aijaz Asad, today conducted an on-site inspection of ongoing and proposed works being executed by the Rural Development Department (RDD) for strengthening infrastructure at the historic Kalidhar Mandir Resai.

During the visit, the Secretary reviewed existing facilities and assessed the requirements to improve amenities for pilgrims and local residents.

In view of the growing influx of devotees and long-standing infrastructural gaps, Aijaz Asad

accorded sanction for the construction of one Yatri Shed and three Community Sanitary Complexes (CSCs) at the shrine.

The sanctioned works are aimed at providing adequate shelter, sanitation and improved public convenience, especially during peak pilgrimage periods.

The Secretary emphasized that all works should be executed in a time-bound manner, ensuring quality standards while maintaining the sanctity and heritage value of the religious site.

The Kalidhar Mandir Committee welcomed the initiative of the Rural Development Department and expressed heartfelt gratitude to Aijaz Asad for addressing a



long-pending demand of devotees.

The committee noted that the new facilities would significantly enhance comfort and hygiene for pilgrims visiting the shrine.

Kalidhar Mandir is a revered and historically significant temple, with origins tracing back nearly four centuries, and attracts a large number of devotees throughout the year from across the region.

The infrastructure strengthening measures are expected to improve the overall pilgrimage experience while preserving the cultural and religious importance of the shrine.

Ab Majeed Lone Sr Assistant CEO Office Ganderbal accorded emotional farewell

HT NEWS NETWORK

GANDERBAL, JAN 31: A grand, warm, and emotionally resonant farewell was accorded today to Mr. Abdul Majeed Lone, Senior Assistant, Chief Education Office Ganderbal, marking the culmination of a journey defined by sincerity, discipline, and quiet excellence.

The farewell function was held under the able and inspiring leadership of "Mr. Oneel Kumar Bhat, Chief Education Officer Ganderbal," in an atmosphere filled with "gratitude, respect, and heartfelt emo-



tions*.

Speakers on the occasion paid rich tributes to Mr. Ab Majeed Lone's "exemplary service, highlighting his unwavering punctuality, sober disposition, ever-smiling countenance, and above all, his identity as a truly good human being". It was repeatedly emphasized that while years measure service, it is character that defines legacy—and Mr. Lone leaves behind a legacy rooted in humility, dedication, and grace.

The function was graced by the presence of colleagues from "Srinagar and Budgam," reflecting the wide respect and affection Mr. Lone earned across districts. The farewell proved deeply emotional for the "staff of the Chief Education Office and Deputy Chief Education Office Ganderbal," for whom Mr. Abdul Majeed Lone was not merely a colleague but a guiding presence and a source of calm strength.

Later in the day, on 31-01-2026, colleagues led by the "Chief Education Officer Ganderbal" accompanied the retiree to his residence, symbolizing that bonds forged through service do not end with retirement but continue with warmth and mutual respect.

The Chief Education Office Ganderbal collectively wished Mr. Abdul Majeed Lone a "peaceful, prosperous, and happy post-retirement life, praying that the coming years bring him good health, contentment, and the joy of a life well lived."

Retirement marks not an end, but a gentle pause—where duty gives way to reflection, and service blossoms into serenity.

Lifeline Restored: BRO reopens strategic 112-km J&K-Himachal road link amid harsh winter

HT NEWS NETWORK

BHADARWAH, JAN 31: The Border Roads Organisation (BRO) on Saturday restored the strategic 112-km Kishtwar-Sansari road, a critical link connecting Jammu and Kashmir's Doda-Kishtwar belt with Himachal Pradesh after clearing massive snow accumulation in record time, officials said.

The restoration work carried out under 'Project Sampark', was executed by the 118 Road Construction Company (RCC) of the 35 Border Roads Task Force (BRTF) amidst extreme weather conditions and sub-zero temperatures.

The route which includes high-altitude sections rising up to 8,759 feet, serves as a crucial inter-state link connecting the Union Territory with the Lahaul-Spiti region of Himachal Pradesh.

"The heavy snowfall between January 22 and 23, measuring about 4 to 5 feet, had blocked the entire



road axis. Fresh snowfall on January 25 further disrupted connectivity in the region. However, BRO teams managed to clear nearly 25 feet of accumulated snow by January 26, restoring access up to Sansari," OC 118 RCC Lt. Col. Jivitesh Razora said.

The connectivity was threatened again when another spell of snowfall on January 27 blocked the route, prompting renewed clearance efforts.

"Between January 28 and 30, BRO teams launched intensive operations and cleared nearly 3.5 feet of accumulated snow within 72 hours, fully reopening the road to traffic on Saturday," he added.

Remarkably, the Kishtwar-Sansari road acts as a "lifeline" for the region. Beyond its strategic value, the road holds immense economic importance as it enables the transport of essential commodities, agricultural produce and other goods between the two regions.

"It also has significant humanitarian value as it ensures access to healthcare, education and emergency services for the remote high-altitude communities which otherwise remain cut off," Razora noted.

Pertinently, the operation was carried out by the 118 RCC under the command of Lt Col Jivitesh Razora following the directions of Commander 35 BRTF, S.K. Singh in the erstwhile Doda district.

BRO and Project Sampark officials commended the dedication of the personnel who carried out the operations in the difficult terrain stating that the effort reflects the organisation's commitment to maintaining strategic and public connectivity even in the harshest winters.

Pulwama Contractors' Association Hails Engineer Sajad Kawoosa for Republic Day Honour

HT NEWS NETWORK

PULWAMA, JAN 31: The Pulwama Contractors' Association has paid rich tributes to Engineer Sajad Kawoosa, presently posted with the Srinagar Municipal Corporation, for being conferred a prestigious honour at Bakshi Stadium on the occasion of Republic Day. The association described the recognition as a well-deserved acknowledgement of his exceptional professional competence, integrity, and unwavering commitment to public service.

Association members stated that Engineer Kawoosa has earned wide respect in both official and public circles for his timely decision-making, practical vision, and ability to resolve complex challenges with efficiency. Under his leadership and supervision, several major and sensitive infrastructure projects were completed not only within stipulated timelines but also in accordance with high quality standards.

His prominent contributions include the construction of the District Court Complex Pulwama, Court Complex Damhal, IPD Hospital Pulwama, Unani Hospital, and other key infrastructure facilities that are now



serving the public at large.

Contractors further noted that Engineer Kawoosa played a pivotal role in completing landmark projects in Pulwama, including the General Bus Stand and Municipal Complex, among several other mega projects. The association emphasized that his services towards the development of

Pulwama are invaluable and will be remembered as a significant chapter in the district's growth story.

The Pulwama Contractors' Association expressed hope that Engineer Sajad Kawoosa will continue to serve the public with the same dedication, honesty, and professional excellence in the years to come.

Public trust in Government hospitals depends on conduct, compassion of doctors, paramedical staff: Sakeena Itoo

Conducts surprise inspection of GMC Jammu,
reviews healthcare facilities

HT NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU, JAN 31: Minister for Health and Medical Education, Social Welfare and Education, Sakeena Itoo today conducted surprise inspection of Government Medical College (GMC) Jammu and took detailed appraisal of healthcare delivery and patient-centric services at the facility.

During the visit, the Health Minister undertook an extensive review of various healthcare facilities within the institution, including emergency wards, inpatient wards, diagnostic units and other critical departments. She assessed the availability of essential medicines, medical equipment, cleanliness staff attendance and overall patient care mechanisms.

The Health Minister also interacted with patients and their attendants to obtain first-hand feedback regarding the quality of treatment, availability of doctors, nursing care and other support services available at the hospital. She keenly listened their concerns and assured them that the government is committed to address gaps and improve healthcare infrastructure across J&K.

During the visit, Minister Sakeena also interacted with doctors, paramedical staff and hospital authorities. "Empathy, professionalism and accountability in public healthcare institutions is very important to ensure quality treatment for patients", she stated.

The Minister also directed the hospital



administration to ensure timely medical attention for patients, maintaining hygiene standards and upholding patient dignity at all levels. She also laid emphasis on strengthening of grievance redressal mechanisms so that patient issues are resolved promptly.

"Public trust in Government hospitals depends mainly on conduct and compassion of doctors and paramedical staff", Minister Sakeena said. She further underscored the Government's resolve to upgrade medical facilities and enhance healthcare service delivery across the length and breadth of Jammu and Kashmir.

Principal GMC Jammu, Dr. Ashutosh Gupta; Medical Superintendent GMC Jammu, Medical Superintendent GMC Jammu, Medical Superintendent Super Speciality Hospital and other senior officers of hospital administration GMC Jammu also accompanied the Health Minister during the visit.

Over 8,000 new artisans trained in GI registered papier mache craft

HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, JAN 31: The Handicrafts and Handloom Department, Kashmir has strongly refuted certain portions of a news story published in a Local daily newspaper with headline - 'The Art Will Die with Us': Srinagar's papier mache craftsmen battle extinction. In a press release issued here today, a spokesman of the Department countered the claims made by Nasir Ahmad Mir, a papier mache craftsman, who was interviewed by a reporter for the news story published on 29.01.2026 of the said newspaper.

Giving details, the spokesperson stated that the Handicrafts and Handloom Department, Kashmir, has 19 training centres across Kashmir Division, imparting hands-on training in papier mache craft to around 400 artisans in elementary and advance training courses every year. "The Department has trained as many as 8,102 new papier mache artisans across the valley, who have taken the unique craft forward and carved out a niche for themselves," he said, adding that a large number of papier mache artisans are still in the unorganised sector, who are being registered so that they can avail the benefits of various flagship schemes of the Government. In order to promote and encourage artisans in papier mache craft, as many as 25 master craftsmen have been conferred with UT Awards over the last 10 years. "Apart from this, J&K has been made proud by papier mache craft maestros like Fayaz Ahmad Jan and Iqbal Hussain Khan, who have been conferred with Padma Shri & Shilp Guru awards respectively in recognition of their contribution in promotion of the craft," he added.

Referring to the Department's initiative of Know Your Artisan, under its Soulful Kashmir brand promotion, campaign, the spokesman said that special representation is made for papier mache craft, which remains the most popular, along with walnut wood carving, in the non-textile craft sector.

Apart from this, the spokesman added that a large number of papier mache artisans are recommended to JKTPO for participation in various J&K and national trade fairs, including IITF at Bharat Mandapam, Suraj Kund Mela in Haryana, Gandhi Shilp Bazaar and other high-profile events.

Dwelling upon the export potential of papier mache products, the spokesman stated that in the last 10 years, artefacts worth 212.06 Cr have been exported to outside destinations from Kashmir. "These figures remain the highest in respect of non-textile crafts in Kashmir Division," he added. In order to ensure the transition of skill from the master to the budding artisans, the Department has instituted a flagship Karkhandar Scheme in the department. "The scheme focuses on preserving traditional crafts such as papier mache, walnut wood carving, silver filigree, carpet weaving, Kani shawl weaving, Khatamband, and others like Sozni, tapestry, and engraved copperware," he added.

Identifying the uniqueness of papier mache craft, both in sakhta and naqashi, the Department has obtained a GI registration for papier mache crafts from GI registry Chennai. "Authorised GI users can avail the facility of testing and QR Code based labelling at PTQCC, CDI, Srinagar, which shall go a long way in penetrating newer markets both within and outside the country.

JKEDI concludes MDPs in 9 districts, trains 208 entrepreneurs under RAMP

■ HT NEW NETWORK

JAMMU/SRINAGAR, JANUARY 31: The Jammu and Kashmir Entrepreneurship Development Institute (JKEDI) on Saturday successfully concluded the sixth and seventh batches of Management Development Programmes (MDPs) in Bandipora, Budgam, Ganderbal, Kathua, Rajouri, Reasi, Samba, Jammu and Doda districts of the Union Territory under the Raising and Accelerating MSME Performance (RAMP) scheme. The scheme is funded by the Ministry of MSME, Government of India, and implemented by the Industries and Commerce Department, Government of Jammu and Kashmir.

A total of 208 aspiring and existing entrepreneurs successfully completed the 30-hour structured training programme, which comprised expert interactions and field exposure visits. Notably, 197 women entrepreneurs participated in the batches, marking a significant stride towards gender inclusivity in the region's entrepreneurial ecosystem. The MDPs were conducted by the respective District Centres of JKEDI under the overall supervision of the Director JKEDI. The MDPs were designed to enhance managerial, financial and strategic



competencies of participants, enabling them to scale up their enterprises, improve competitiveness and develop sustainable business models. The initiative aligns with the broader objectives of the RAMP

programme, which seeks to strengthen and modernise the MSME ecosystem across the country.

The carefully curated curriculum, developed by subject matter experts, covered

key areas including business planning, marketing strategies, use of digital tools, financial literacy, statutory compliance, and innovation and leadership development. The training also featured mentorship sessions, case studies, interactive discussions and hands-on workshops to provide participants with practical, real-world business insights.

Sector-specific sessions formed an important component of the MDPs, with experts from the District Industries Centres (DICs) and the Labour and Employment Department interacting with participants to share domain-specific guidance. In addition, field visits to successful enterprises were organised to provide firsthand exposure to operational best practices.

The programmes were regularly monitored by designated Range and Reviewing Officers, who interacted with participants to assess training quality and gather feedback, ensuring effective implementation and impact. The successful conclusion of the MDPs reflects JKEDI's continued commitment to fostering entrepreneurship and building local capacity to drive economic growth in Jammu and Kashmir.

DC Baramulla launches Sampoonata 2.0 Abhiyan in district

■ HT NEW NETWORK

BARAMULLA, JANUARY 31: Deputy Commissioner Baramulla, Minga Sherpa, today launched the Sampoonata 2.0 Abhiyan at Dak Bungalow, Baramulla in the presence of senior district and sectoral officers.

The campaign which will end on 14th April 2026 aims to achieve saturation of all identified 11 Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) under NITI Aayog's Aspirational District Programme (ADP) and Aspirational Block Programme (ABP).

As part of the launch event, the DC inaugurated stalls and awareness camps set up on the occasion by various departments, including Rural Development Department (RDD), ICDS, Agriculture, NRLM, and Health. These stalls aimed to spread awareness about government schemes and services, while facilitating on-the-spot outreach to beneficiaries.



Meanwhile, the DC administered a pledge to all officers and officials present, reaffirming their collective commitment to ensuring complete saturation of the 11 KPIs under both the Aspirational District and Aspirational Block Programme.

During the launch, the DC, along with district officers, also participated in a handprint and signature pledge, symbolising shared responsibility and dedication towards achieving the objectives of NITI Aayog's Sampoonata 2.0.

Speaking on the occasion, Minga Sherpa emphasized the importance of inter-departmental coordination, proactive field engagement, and focused monitoring to ensure timely and measurable progress under the Sampoonata 2.0 Abhiyan.

Furthermore, the DC instructed the officers to ensure maximum field presence, intensive beneficiary identification, and strict adherence to timelines to translate policy objectives into tangible benefits for the people.

The launch event was attended by the consultant NITI Aayog, Amitesh Pandey; Chief Planning Officer Baramulla, Nisar Ahmad; Assistant Commissioner Development Baramulla, Mudassir Hussain; Assistant Commissioner Revenue Baramulla, Arshad Ahmad, and other district officers and officials from various departments.

Later, the DC Baramulla led a march from Dak Bungalow to the DC Office, joined by district officers and other stakeholders, collectively reaffirming their commitment to achieving saturation of key indicators under the Aspirational District Programme (ADP) and Aspirational Blocks Programme (ABP).

DLSA Srinagar organizes Legal Awareness Program for Veer Parivaars

■ HT NEW NETWORK

SRINAGAR, JANUARY 31: District Legal Services Authority (DLSA) Srinagar in collaboration with the Zilla Sainik Welfare Board, organized an awareness programme aimed at assisting the families of serving and ex servicemen with issues relating to pension matters, service benefits and various welfare schemes, under the guidance of Haq Nawaz Zargar Chairman, DLSA (Pr. Distt. & Sessions Judge), Srinagar and overall supervision of Secretary DLSA, Srinagar.

The programme was conducted to sensitize Veer Parivaars about their Legal rights and entitlements and to provide guidance on availing benefits under different government schemes.



The resource person Tasneem Kausar, Deputy Legal Aid Defense Counsel elaborated on pension related procedures, service benefits and legal remedies available in case of grievances.

The special emphasis was laid on the benefits available under the NALSA Veer Parivaar Sahayata Yojna- 2025 which aims to provide free legal aid and support to the families of defence personnel, martyrs and veterans. The participants were informed about the eligibility criteria, the process of seeking legal assistance and the role of Legal Services Authorities in safeguarding their rights. The programme witnessed active participation from the beneficiaries, who appreciated the initiative taken by the DLSA Srinagar to bring legal awareness an support to door step of Veer Parivaars. DLSA Srinagar reaffirms its commitment to ensuring access to justice and legal aid for all, especially for those who have served the nation.

DC Budgam reviews implementation of Pradhan Mantri Viksit Bharat Rozgar Yojana

■ HT NEW NETWORK

BUDGAM, JANUARY 31: A review of the implementation of the Pradhan Mantri Viksit Bharat Rozgar Yojana (PM-VBRY) was today undertaken in a meeting convened at DC Office Budgam, under the chairmanship of the District Development Commissioner, Budgam, Dr. Bilal Mohi-ud-Din Bhat.

During the meeting, the overall progress of the scheme in the district was reviewed in detail. The registration status of establishments and beneficiaries was taken up for thorough assessment, and district-wise performance indicators were examined to evaluate the pace of implementation.

It was informed during the review that 46 establishments have been registered in the district till January 30, 2026.

The meeting was further informed that 130 new-time employees have been registered under the scheme, while 67 re-joiners have also been brought under coverage, indicating gradual expansion of formal employment opportunities in Budgam district.

The DC reviewed the implementation mechanisms in place and highlighted the need for strengthening field-level execution. He emphasised on ensuring

that eligible establishments are facilitated for timely registration and that procedural bottlenecks, if any, are promptly addressed to avoid delays in onboarding.

The DC stressed that continuous monitoring of progress shall be maintained and that periodic reviews shall be conducted to track outcomes and improve performance.

He directed officers to ensure that all relevant data is updated regularly and that accurate reporting is maintained to reflect the actual progress of the scheme.

He further emphasized that sustained efforts shall be made to enhance awareness among employers and potential beneficiaries, so that the intended benefits of the scheme reach a wider section of the workforce.

The DC underscored the importance of maintaining transparency, efficiency and accountability in the implementation process. He directed for strengthening follow-up mechanisms and ensuring that the objectives of employment generation, workforce formalization and livelihood enhancement are achieved in a structured and time-bound manner.

The DC gave specific directions to the Chief Education Officer and General

Manager, District Industries Centre (DIC), to ensure enrolment of eligible uninsured employees under the Provident Fund (PF) and to get all eligible establishments registered on the Pradhan Mantri Viksit Bharat portal.

Moreover, He directed all the executing agencies to furnish lists of casual and daily-wage workers, so that further necessary action can be initiated with respect to their enrolment under the provisions of the Employees' Provident Fund and Miscellaneous Provisions Act.

The DC focussed on expanding social security coverage and bringing more workers into the formal social protection framework.

It is pertinent to mention that the PM-VBRY is a flagship initiative of the Government of India aimed at promoting formal employment through incentives for new hiring. The scheme supports sustainable job creation and encourages the integration of workers into the formal economy, while also facilitating the re-entry of eligible re-joiners, thereby strengthening income security and economic resilience.

The meeting was attended by CPO Budgam, ACD, CEO, Municipal Committee Budgam; General Manager DIC, and officials from R&B, Jal Shakti, Rural Engineering Wing (REW), Labour Department and Handicrafts Department.

DLSA Srinagar organizes Special Lok Adalat at District Court Complex Mominabad

■ HT NEW NETWORK

SRINAGAR, JANUARY 31: District Legal Services Authority (DLSA) Srinagar, organized a Special Lok Adalat for Criminal Compoundable Cases at the District Court Complex, Mominabad, Srinagar.

The Lok Adalat, aimed at amicably resolving Criminal Compoundable Cases, which was held under the direction of Haq Nawaz Zargar, Chairman District Legal Services Authority (Principal District & Sessions Judge) Srinagar, and under the supervision of Sub-judge/Secretary DLSA Srinagar. To facilitate the amicable settlement of cases, two benches were constituted for the Lok



Adalat. Bench first was headed by Fida Hussain Nayek, Municipal Magistrate Srinagar and Nazia Hassan, 4th Addl. Munsiff Srinagar and bench second was presided over by Junaid Imtiyaz Mir, Sub Judge Srinagar and Vikas Bhardwaj, 2nd Additional Munsiff Srinagar.

A total number of two Cases were taken up by the bench for their amicable settlement and both cases were settled.

Road Safety Month concludes at Shopian

■ HT NEW NETWORK

SHOPIAN, JANUARY 31: A month-long Road Safety awareness campaign, organised by Motor Vehicles Department (MVD) Shopian, concluded today with a valedictory programme here at Rising Genius School, Gargen.

The campaign witnessed a series of awareness activities including seminars, rallies, interactive sessions and outreach programmes aimed at sensitizing drivers, pedestrians, students and the general public about traffic rules and road discipline.

Speaking on the occasion, the authorities highlighted that road safety is a collective responsibility and stressed the need for strict adherence to traffic regulations,

use of helmets and seat belts, avoidance of over-speeding and zero tolerance towards drunken driving.

Emphasis was also laid on protecting vulnerable road users and ensuring safety of school children and pedestrians.

Officials from the transport department, Police, education department, health sector, civil society members and volunteers actively participated in the month-long initiative, making it a people-centric movement.

The programme concluded with a pledge to continue sustained efforts beyond the Road Safety month to reduce road accidents and save precious lives through awareness, enforcement and community participation.

District-Level Scheme Delivery & Post-Credit Support Program organised at Kulgam

■ HT NEW NETWORK

KULGAM, JANUARY, 31: A district-level programme under Mission YUVA- Beyond Sanctions Campaign was organised at the Conference Hall, Mini Secretariat, Kulgam, with the objective of strengthening scheme delivery mechanisms and institutionalising structured post-credit support for Mission YUVA beneficiaries.

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

Khan.

Addressing the gathering, the Additional District Development Commissioner, emphasised the importance of accountability, clarity of expectations, and sustained institutional engagement to ensure the long-term viability and growth of enterprises supported under Mission YUVA. He stated that the Beyond Sanctions Campaign would serve as a structured and replicable Panchayat-level model for continuous post-credit

engagement and enterprise support across the district.

It was shared that Mission YUVA has facilitated access to institutional credit for youth to initiate entrepreneurial ventures. Recognising that credit disbursement is only the first step for first-generation entrepreneurs, the Beyond Sanctions Campaign has been conceptualised as a District/Sub-divisional-level platform to ensure sustained handholding, awareness generation, regular monitoring, grievance redressal,

and continuous enterprise health support.

The programme aimed to disseminate comprehensive scheme information through a structured outreach mechanism, set clear expectations for beneficiaries regarding their post-credit journey, and build awareness about key post-sanction support pillars. These include capacity building through hybrid training courses, enterprise mentorship, MSME Health Clinics, enterprise output tracking mechanisms,

and the ONDC-based e-commerce platform available on the Mission YUVA App.

Emphasis was also laid on digital and financial literacy to enhance enterprise sustainability. Beneficiaries were provided with detailed scheme information through brochures, presentations, and guided discussions covering eligibility criteria, benefits, credit processes, timelines, and operational guidelines. They were also oriented about post-sanction support services,

including capacity-building activities linked with subsidy tranches, registration and participation in MSME Health Clinics, enterprise output reporting timelines, and onboarding onto the ONDC-based e-commerce platform.

The programme also featured sharing of success stories of local entrepreneurs to motivate participants.

A local grievance redressal desk was established during the program to address beneficiary issues, with clearly

defined escalation mechanisms to Block and District-level grievance redressal cells. Beneficiary feedback was collected through a structured online mechanism to improve service delivery.

The programme was attended by members of the Small Business Development Unit (SBDU), Career Counselling Officer (CCO), Department of Employment Kulgam, Business Help Desk (BHD) members from Cluster-II, and other concerned officers.

Chief Justice inaugurates orientation programme on “ICT, e-Courts”, “AI and its impact on Judiciary”

■ HT NEW NETWORK

JAMMU, JANUARY 31: Under the patronage of Chief Justice, High Court of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh (Patron-in-Chief, J&K Judicial Academy), Arun Palli and guidance of Chairperson and members of Governing Committee for J&K Judicial Academy, the Jammu & Kashmir Judicial Academy today organised a one day orientation programme on “ICT and e-Courts Induction Programme” for the newly recruited Civil Judges (ECT-17-2025)” and “Artificial Intelligence and its Impact on Judiciary” at J&K Judicial Academy, Janipur, Jammu.

The programme was inaugurated by the Chief Justice, who in his inaugural address observed that the judiciary is entering a decisive phase where technology and justice delivery are inseparably linked.

Referring to recent observations of the Chief Justice of India, he noted that Artificial Intelligence and digital platforms will increasingly be used for monitoring case pendency, data analysis and case management.

The Chief Justice emphasised that for officers serving in remote and challenging districts, technology is not merely an aid but a vital instrument to ensure timely and effective justice. Stressing that such programmes



are meant to build not only technical proficiency but also institutional understanding, the Chief Justice called upon the officers to adopt technology with confidence and purpose to strengthen the justice delivery system.

In his special address, Justice Rajnesh Oswal, Judge, High Court of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh and Chairperson, Governing Committee for J&K Judicial Academy, observed that Artificial Intelligence is increasingly being used in the process of adjudication, including as an aid in the drafting

of judgments. Justice Rajnesh Oswal remarked that while AI has significant merits and can substantially assist the judicial officers in research, analysis and efficiency, it also carries inherent limitations and demerits.

Emphasising the need for judicious application, Justice Oswal cautioned that AI should be used profusely as a supportive tool but never as a substitute for human reasoning. He said that the judicial officers must use AI with their own intellect and discernment,

without relying solely upon it.

The programme commenced with an introductory address by Naseer Ahmad Dar, Director, J&K Judicial Academy. He highlighted that the objective of the programme was to sensitise the newly recruited Civil Judges to the practical aspects of ICT tools, e-Courts applications and emerging technologies, including Artificial Intelligence.

M.K. Sharma, Registrar General, High Court of J&K and Ladakh, and Rajeev Gupta, Registrar Vigilance, High Court of J&K and Ladakh, along with other officers of the

Registry, also attended the inaugural session.

During the first technical session, Umesh Sharma, Registrar (IT), High Court of J&K and Ladakh, provided an overview of the e-Courts Project, introduced the Case Information System (CIS) and conducted a practical demonstration of key CIS features relevant to day-to-day judicial functioning.

The second Technical session was conducted by Faizan I Nazar, CPC, e-Courts, High Court of J&K and Ladakh, who deliberated on the rules governing ICT, including e-Filing Rules, Nyay-Shruti Rules, NSTEP and the rules relating to preparation and supply of copies, including e-True Copies of records in the Union Territories of J&K and Ladakh.

In the third technical session, Dr. Karnika A. Seth, Advocate, Supreme Court of India, delivered an insightful lecture through virtual mode on “Artificial Intelligence and its Impact on Judiciary”, discussing the opportunities, challenges and ethical considerations associated with the use of AI in judicial processes.

The programme concluded with an interactive session and feedback from the participants, followed by a vote of thanks proposed by the Director, J&K Judicial Academy.

Two day’s training cum workshop program on AI concludes at IIT Jammu

■ HT NEW NETWORK

JAMMU, JANUARY 31: Commissioner Secretary Industries and Commerce, Vikramjit Singh today addressed the valedictory session of two day’s training cum workshop program on AI, organised by Directorate of Industries and Commerce, Jammu in collaboration with Indian Institute of Technology Jammu.

Director, Industries and Commerce, Jammu, Dr. Arun Kumar Manhas; Prof. Bijoy H Boruah and Dr. Amitash Ojha from department of Humanities and Social Science, IIT Jammu, other faculty members, scientists, research scholars and large number of students were also present on the occasion.



Addressing the gathering, the Commissioner Secretary highlighted the need of capacity building exercises with changing dynamics in working environment. He urged the participants to upgrade their existing skill sets to cope up with the emerging demands.

Speaking on the occasion, Dr. Arun Manhas emphasised on how Data Analytics and AI is revolutionizing e-governance in serving citizens with unprecedented efficiency and transparency. He further encouraged the participants to apply the learning on their day to day assignments.

On the occasion, the Commissioner Secretary also distributed certificates among participants.

Pertinently, the workshop commenced on 29th January and primarily covered the topics of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Advanced MS Excel operations and their application in governance. More than 70 Participants attended the training program.

The training programme was aimed at skill development and capacity building of officers and officials of the department in alignment with the increasing demand of data analytics and AI in governance. The training cum workshop was set to empower the participants with cutting-edge skills in leveraging AI with MS Excel and enhancing data preparation and analysis skills for its further application in data-driven decision making. Based on the learning from the program, the participants gave group presentations on the various topics relevant to governance in AI.

DIC Kupwara bids Farewell to FPA Mohd Ashraf Khan

■ HT NEW NETWORK

KUPWARA, JANUARY 31: District Information Centre (DIC) Kupwara today organized a warm farewell ceremony in honour of Field Publicity Assistant (FPA) Mohammad Ashraf Khan, marking his completion of tenure after rendering dedicated services to the department.

On the occasion, District Information Officer (DIO) Kupwara, Iftakhar Naseem and staff of District Information Centre Kupwara lauded the professionalism, sincerity, and commitment displayed by Mohd Ashraf Khan during his tenure. His contribution towards effective dissemination of government information, coordination with field staff, and support was widely appreciated.



Speaking at the farewell, DIO Kupwara, highlighted his role in coverage of government events especially during the era when there was very limited means of telecommunication. He wished him successful post-retirement life.

Colleagues recalled his cooperative nature, work ethic, and positive approach, which made him a valued member of DIC Kupwara team.

In his farewell remarks, Mohammad Ashraf Khan expressed gratitude to the department for the support and cooperation extended to him throughout his service. He thanked his colleagues for their camaraderie and shared experiences, stating that his association with District Information Centre Kupwara would always remain memorable.

PD&SJ Ganderbal holds meeting on “Mediation For The Nation Campaign 2.0”

■ HT NEW NETWORK

GANDERBAL, JANUARY 31: In furtherance of the nationwide initiative “Mediation for The Nation 2.0”, Principal District & Sessions Judge (PD&SJ) (Coordinator District Mediation Center), Ganderbal, chaired a meeting with Judicial Officers and Trained Mediators of the District to review, deliberate and strengthen the implementation of ‘Mediation for the Nation Campaign 2.0’.

The meeting, attended by Judicial Officers and Trained Mediators, focused on identifying cases suitable for mediation and emphasizing the importance of Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) mechanisms in reducing pending cases. Pr. District &

Sessions Judge stressed that judicial officers should verify records and identify cases fit for mediation, and instructed them to pre-pone cases by issuing notices to parties.

During the deliberations, the PD&SJ highlighted the objectives of the Mediation for the Nation 2.0 campaign, which aim to institutionalize mediation as a preferred mode of dispute resolution across the country. Mediators were apprised about the campaign’s importance, assured of additional empanelment as needed and were also informed about Honorarium payment strictly as per MCPG Guidelines. It was further decided to organize awareness programs in the district to educate litigants and the public about mediation benefits.

The meeting highlighted the role of judicial officers and mediators in promoting mediation, with a focus on civil, matrimonial, commercial, and criminal compoundable matters.

The campaign aims to institutionalize mediation as a preferred dispute resolution mode, fostering a culture of dialogue and consensual resolution.

Judicial Officers and Trained Mediators shared their experiences, challenges, and best practices related to mediation, and constructive suggestions were discussed to further improve the outreach and success of the initiative in District Ganderbal. The PD&SJ reiterated the district’s commitment to making Mediation for the Nation 2.0 a success.

DLSA Ganderbal conducts SOP-Based Programme on Parole, Furlough and Premature Release at Central Jail Srinagar

■ HT NEW NETWORK

GANDERBAL, JANUARY 31: Reaffirming its commitment to constitutional guarantees, reformative justice, and access to justice for incarcerated persons, the District Legal Services Authority (DLSA), Ganderbal, conducted a high-impact legal awareness programme on the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) governing Parole, Furlough, and Premature Release at Central Jail, Srinagar.

The programme aimed at empowering inmates with clear, actionable legal knowledge regarding their rights, eligibility criteria, and procedural safeguards, thereby dismantling information barriers that often impede timely access to statutory release mechanisms. The initiative sought

to ensure that liberty-based entitlements are exercised lawfully, transparently, and without arbitrariness, in consonance with constitutional mandates.

The programme was organised under the guidance of Shazia Tabasum, Member Secretary, J&K Legal Services Authority, and Abdul Nasir, Chairman, District Legal Services Authority, Ganderbal, with effective coordination by Sheikh Babar Hussain, Secretary, DLSA Ganderbal.

The initiative was conducted in strict conformity with the Calendar of Activities issued by the National Legal Services Authority (NALSA) and the Jammu & Kashmir Legal Services Authority (J&K LSA), reflecting a policy-aligned, rights-oriented, and outcome-driven approach towards strengthening prison justice



reforms.

Tanveer Ashraf, Romani Syed, and Burjeena Hamid served as Resource Persons and delivered a comprehensive and jurisprudentially grounded exposition of the SOPs relating to

parole, furlough, and premature release. The sessions clearly articulated the distinct legal character and objectives of each mechanism.

The Resource Persons meticulously explained the eligibility thresholds, statutory exclusions, procedural safeguards, and the multi-layered scrutiny process, including the role of prison administration, police verification, conduct and probation reports, and decision-making by competent authorities. Emphasis was laid on procedural timelines, maintenance of jail discipline, and compliance with prison rules, reinforcing that SOPs are designed to ensure uniform application of the law.

Special emphasis was laid on the availability of free and competent legal aid through the

Legal Services Authorities framework, thereby reinforcing the constitutional promise of equal access to justice for under-trial prisoners and convicts.

The programme witnessed robust engagement from inmates, who actively participated and sought clarification on individual legal issues. The initiative was widely appreciated for its legal depth, practical orientation, and rights-affirming approach.

The District Legal Services Authority, Ganderbal, reiterated its steadfast commitment to constitutional morality, human dignity, and reformative justice, and to advancing a transparent, humane, and rights-based correctional justice system through sustained legal awareness, institutional outreach, and prisoner-centric interventions.

Special Lok-Adalat on Criminal Compoundable Cases held at Ganderbal

■ HT NEW NETWORK

GANDERBAL, JANUARY 31: District Legal Services Authority (DLSA), Ganderbal, organized a Special Lok Adalat for Criminal Compoundable Cases today in the District Ganderbal.

The Lok-Adalat was overseen by Shazia Tabasum, Member Secretary, J&K Legal Services Authority, and Abdul Nasir, Chairman, District Legal Services Authority, Ganderbal, along with the guidance of Sheikh

Babar Hussain, Secretary, DLSA Ganderbal.

Three Benches were constituted for amicable settlement of the cases. The First Bench was presided over by Nusrat Ali Hakak, Chief Judicial Magistrate, Ganderbal and Sajid Irfan, Deputy Legal Aid Defense Counsel, Ganderbal as the bench member. The Second Bench was presided over by Mahoor, Munsiff/JMIC, Ganderbal and Asima Khaliq, Assistant Legal Aid Defense Counsel, Ganderbal as the Bench Member. The Third Bench was

presided over by Moonis Wahid, Munsiff/JMIC, Kangan and Advocate, Suhail Ahmad Mir as the Bench member. First two benches heard cases at District Court Complex, Ganderbal and third bench heard cases at Munsiff/JMIC Court Kangan.

A total number of 35 cases were taken up by the Benches, out of which 7 cases were successfully settled.

The Lok Adalat conducted reflects the unwavering commitment of District Legal Services Authority, Ganderbal in delivering justice to all.

District administration Ramban bids farewell to Reader (Girdawar) Manohar Singh

■ HT NEW NETWORK

RAMBAN, JANUARY 31: After rendering 35 years of service in the Revenue Department, Manohar Singh today superannuated as Reader (Girdawar) from the office of the Additional Deputy Commissioner, Ramban.

He was accorded a warm send-off by Deputy Commissioner Ramban Mohammad Alyas Khan, Additional Deputy Commissioner, Varunjeet Singh Charak, along with senior officers of



the district administration and staff members.

The DC and senior officers lauded the retiree for his efficient, prompt and sincere services. They appreciated his strong work ethic and remarkable contributions towards public service throughout his distinguished career. Manohar Singh expressed heartfelt gratitude to all officers and officials for their constant support and cooperation during his service.

ACR Shokat Hayat Mattoo, SDM Ramsay Sayed Mazahir Hussain, Tehsilidar Deep Kumar and other senior officers were present on the occasion.

HT EDITORIAL

Don't worry Papier Mache art is here to stay

The art of papier mache is connected with the heritage of Kashmir and steps should be taken to preserve this art. In this regard the Department of Handicrafts has trained as many as 8,102 new papier mache artisans across the valley. These artisans have taken the unique craft forward and made a mark in the market. The registration of these papier mache artisans has not been done so far and they continue to be in the unorganised sector.

In the 19 training centres spread across the Kashmir division hands-on training in papier mache craft is being imparted to around 400 artisans in elementary and advanced courses every year. As many as 25 master craftsmen have been conferred with the union territory level awards over the last 10 years. Papier mache craft maestros like Fayaz Ahmad Jan and Iqbal Hussain Khan have been conferred with the Padma Shri and Shilp Guru awards respectively in recognition of their contribution in promotion of the craft.

Special representation is made for papier mache craft, which remains the most popular, along with walnut wood carving, in the non-textile craft sector. A large number of papier mache artisans are recommended to Jammu & Kashmir Trade Promotion Organization for participation in various UT level and national trade fairs, including IITF at Bharat Mandapam, Suraj Kund Mela in Haryana, Gandhi Shilp Bazaar and other high-profile events. Artefacts worth Rs. 212.06 crores have been exported to outside destinations from Kashmir.

The Department of Handicrafts has instituted the flagship Karkhandar scheme that focuses on preserving traditional crafts such as papier mache, walnut wood carving, silver filigree, carpet weaving, Kani shawl weaving, Khatamband and others like Sozni, tapestry and engraved copperware. It would be in place to mention here that the Department of Handicrafts has obtained a GI registration for papier mache crafts from GI registry Chennai. All these steps mean that the concerned department is quite serious in preserving this art connected with the heritage of the valley.

At the same time the younger generation of the papier mache artisans should understand that this art has a tremendous potential and there is no reason for them to lose heart. It is important that innovations take place and the young artisans come out with new designs so that they are able to capture the market. In such a manner new markets would be explored and the art of papier mache would get a fresh meaning.

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Learning Has No Limits

Great People Contribute to the Whole of Humanity Without Any Personal Gain



■ SAHIL MANZOOR BHATTI

Great people are remembered not for what they accumulated, but for what they contributed to humanity. Their lives stand as shining examples of selflessness, dedication, and service to mankind. True greatness lies in working for the collective good rather than for personal benefit. History is filled with visionary individuals whose sacrifices, innovations, and moral courage changed the world forever, without any expectation of reward or recognition.

Education plays a pivotal role in shaping such great personalities. It is not merely a means to secure employment or attain financial stability; rather, it is the process of becoming civilized, enlightened, and responsible. The true purpose of education is to cultivate wisdom, integrity, compassion, and a sense of duty toward society. Education should empower individuals to achieve life goals that contribute to a better standard of living not only for themselves but also for the entire community.

Unfortunately, in today's world, the meaning of education has been largely misunderstood. Many people believe that education exists solely to obtain government jobs, earn money through unfair means, and live a comfortable life without dedication or sacrifice for the nation. This narrow mindset has weakened the moral foundation of education. Education never encourages illegal assets or unethical practices; instead, it instills honesty, discipline, and accountability. A truly educated person understands that personal success is incomplete without social responsibility.

Education is class apart—it opens the doors of vision for those who are intellectually blind and guides them toward enlightenment. It nurtures empathy and motivates individuals to extend a helping hand to the helpless. An educated society is one in which people respect one another, value justice, and work collectively to overcome challenges. When education is driven by moral values, it becomes a powerful instrument of social transformation.

■ Visionary People and Their Role in Humanity

Who are visionary people? Visionary individuals are those who think beyond personal interests and short-term gains. They dedicate their intellect, research, and creativity to the welfare of humanity. Such scholars are never selfish; they willingly sacrifice comfort, time, and sometimes even their lives for the greater good. Their aim is not fame or wealth, but the advancement of knowledge and the betterment of society.

An educationally qualified person is not merely one who holds degrees, but one who uses knowledge responsibly and ethically. True scholars dedicate their research and innovations to humanity without expecting personal benefit. Their contributions become milestones in human progress. Scientists, philosophers, teachers, reformers, and inventors who worked selflessly

have their names written in golden letters in the pages of history. Though they may not have lived luxurious lives, they live forever through their work.

Across the globe, especially in developed countries, people willingly engage in research with the sole aim of uplifting humanity. They invest years in experimentation, innovation, and exploration so that future generations may live better lives. Such commitment reflects a deep understanding of education's true purpose.

■ Reforming the Education System

The education system should be based on curiosity and creativity. Curiosity is the foundation of innovation and discovery. The greater the curiosity toward educational goals, the more support should be provided to learners. This support may include full-fledged scholarships, research grants, and access to quality learning resources.

Education should offer fair and transparent opportunities to all students. Entrance examinations must be conducted with integrity, ensuring equal chances for every aspirant. Proper counseling at different educational levels is essential to identify students who are inclined toward research, innovation, and critical thinking. Continuous follow-up with such learners can help nurture future scholars and scientists, making the nation proud on global platforms.

Today's era demands extraordinary talent to lead nations forward, especially in science and technology. Technology plays an immense role in national development by enhancing productivity, improving living standards, and generating employment. Countries that invest heavily in education and research automatically witness growth in other sectors such as healthcare, industry, agriculture, and infrastructure.

Every nation across the world is striving to strengthen its education sector. Where education is well developed, progress becomes inevitable. Sensible individuals give their hundred percent effort to every task assigned to them, understanding that success does not come overnight. Achieving remarkable results in a short span of time is impossible without educated, skilled, and well-trained human resources.

■ Education, Technology, and Human Potential

Today, we live in a world that appears to be governed by machines. Machines made of iron, plastic, and other elements dominate industries, households, and communication systems. However, it is important to remember that machines are created by humans and ultimately controlled by human intelligence. Every technological advancement is the outcome of human creativity and education.

In our daily lives, we use countless inventions such as smartphones, vehicles, computers, and photocopiers—each a testament to human intellect. The Almighty has blessed humanity with a powerful brain whose potential goes beyond imagination. Only a few individuals fully utilize this gift and bring revolutions to the world through groundbreaking inventions.

Studies suggest that even great scientists use only a fraction of their brain's capacity, yet they create wonders that transform civilizations. This fact highlights the immense untapped potential within every individual. With proper guidance, education, and motivation, ordinary people can

achieve extraordinary feats.

■ Respecting Individual Interests and Talents

Some individuals aspire to become teachers, while others dream of becoming doctors, engineers, researchers, or artists. It is essential to respect the interests and abilities of learners rather than forcing them into unwanted fields. Every individual possesses unique potential, and success lies in nurturing that potential.

Students interested in the medical field should be encouraged and supported, as they have the potential to serve humanity by saving lives. Similarly, those inclined toward engineering can contribute significantly to national development by building infrastructure, advancing technology, and strengthening the economy. Government initiatives and educational schemes play a vital role in enabling students to achieve their dreams regardless of financial constraints.

The world is full of opportunities for those who believe in themselves. Talent never goes in vain when combined with dedication and perseverance. Each individual has distinct skills and abilities, and every talent has global scope if utilized effectively.

■ Self-Discovery, Discipline, and Growth

In today's interconnected world, social media has brought people closer than ever before. However, it is crucial to use time wisely. Idleness rusts abilities, while productive engagement sharpens skills. Individuals should constantly strive to understand their strengths and work toward self-improvement.

The day a person recognizes his or her true talent is the day real success begins. Modern learners have access to unlimited resources—online courses, digital libraries, tutorials, and research platforms. Unlike the past, when resources were scarce, today knowledge is just a click away. What is required is patience, perseverance, consistency, and hard work.

■ Scoring Well in Examinations

Academic success also depends on discipline and strategy. One important aspect of examinations is handwriting. Neat, legible handwriting creates a positive impression on evaluators. Students should avoid cutting, overwriting, and unnecessary corrections.

Always attempt questions you are confident about first. Preparation should begin from the very first day of a new class. "Do not put off until tomorrow what can be done today." Procrastination only increases stress and difficulty.

Answers should be precise and relevant, avoiding unnecessary details. Using a ruler, leaving proper spacing, and maintaining cleanliness in the answer sheet enhance presentation. Writing the roll number and required particulars carefully is equally important before submission.

■ Conclusion

Education is the backbone of a progressive society. When education is guided by moral values, curiosity, and dedication, it produces visionary individuals who work selflessly for humanity. Great people do not live for themselves alone; they live for the world. By redefining education, respecting individual talents, and nurturing curiosity, we can build a future where knowledge serves humanity rather than personal greed.

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A Train To Chenab Vallay



■ MOOL RAJ

Marwah finally has network connectivity. Airtel signals now climb mountains that policies never did. Calls connect, voices travel, WhatsApp ticks turn blue. In 2025, this achievement is announced with the ceremonial seriousness usually reserved for space missions. One is tempted to ask: should we clap, cry, or quietly ask why this moment arrived so late that even celebration feels slightly embarrassing?

This is the Chenab Valley—Doda, Kishtwar, Ramban—where electricity and mobile networks are still framed as gifts rather than rights. Where development arrives like a rare tourist: photographed excessively, explained loudly, and then expected to leave.

Somewhere in this mood, social media recently delivered a marvel. An AI-generated video showed two trains gliding gracefully near Habib Mall at Doda Bus Stand. Smooth tracks, modern coaches, urban confidence. The video was fake, but the excitement was real. People shared it not because they believed it blindly, but because they wanted to. Hope has become so starved here that even artificial intelligence feels like a planning commission.

Satire aside, the deeper question bites: do people in Doda and Kishtwar actually expect to see a train in their lifetime? Or has imagination replaced infrastructure so completely that pixels now do the work roads and rails never did?

Meanwhile, a different kind of development narrative keeps being imposed from above. The Chenab Bridge in Reasi is repeatedly showcased as "Chenab Valley development." Let's be precise, because journalism must be cruel to sloppy geography. The bridge is an engineering triumph, yes—one of global significance. It deserves applause. But Reasi is not Doda.

Reasi is not Kishtwar. Reasi is not Ramban. Celebrating the bridge as development of the Chenab Valley is like inaugurating an airport in Delhi and claiming progress for Doda Airport. Geography matters. So does honesty.

There is also a cruel irony in timing. Just as network connectivity reaches Marwah and other far-flung areas begin tasting basic amenities, another reminder arrives—Chenab Valley falls in Seismic Zone VI. Among the most earthquake-prone regions in the Himalayas. This is not a footnote. This is a warning label. Development here cannot be cosmetic. It cannot be ribbon-cutting without resilience. You don't introduce fragile infrastructure into a fragile land and then call it progress.

Why did it take until 2025 for mobile signals to reach regions that send soldiers, labourers, and voters to the nation? Why is digital access celebrated while road connectivity still collapses every winter? Why does every promise here arrive with a press release but no deadline?

The AI train near Habib Mall

Doda was fake. The laughter around it was real. But behind that laughter is a quiet exhaustion. People are tired of being told that miracles are nearby while basics crawl. They don't need trams tomorrow. They need roads that don't kill, hospitals that don't refer everything out, schools that don't shut with snowfall, and networks that don't vanish with the first cloudburst.

One day, perhaps, a real train will be seen in Doda or Kishtwar. When that day comes, it shouldn't feel like science fiction finally turning real. It should feel boring, expected, overdue. Until then, satire will continue to do what policy refuses to—hold up a mirror and ask why a fake video can travel faster than real development.

In the Chenab Valley, hope now comes with network bars. Progress, however, still needs foundations strong enough to survive both earthquakes and excuses.

THE AUTHOR IS A REGULAR
COLUMNIST AND FREELANCE
WRITER

Kashmir battles a silent epidemic



■ MOHAMMAD HANIEF

The health scenario in Kashmir is undergoing a profound transformation, and the most striking feature of this change is the rising number of diseases affecting its population. Where once the valley's health concerns were dominated by infectious illnesses and maternal mortality, today non-communicable diseases such as diabetes, hypertension, cardiovascular ailments, and cancer are increasing at an alarming pace. This surge reflects lifestyle changes, dietary habits, and the psychological stress of living in a region. The growing burden of disease has become the defining challenge for Kashmir's healthcare system, forcing policymakers, doctors, and communities to rethink how health is delivered and sustained.

The rise of non-communicable diseases has not replaced older challenges but added to them. Tuberculosis, water-borne illnesses, and seasonal flu outbreaks continue to affect rural areas, creating a dual burden that stretches the system thin. Hospitals in Srinagar and Jammu report increasing admissions for chronic conditions, while district facilities struggle to keep pace with both communicable and lifestyle-related illnesses. This shift in disease patterns is not unique to Kashmir, but the region's fragile infrastructure and limited resources make the impact more severe. The valley's health system, already strained by geography and political instability, now faces the daunting task of addressing both traditional and modern health challenges simultaneously.

Infrastructure growth has been one of the most visible responses to these challenges. Over the past decade, new hospitals have been built, district facilities upgraded, and medical colleges established. The promise of flagship projects such as the All India Institute of Medical Sciences in Kashmir has raised expectations of a modernized system capable of meeting the valley's needs. Public-private partnerships have introduced diagnostic centers, telemedicine services, and mobile health units, offering new avenues of care in remote districts. These initiatives have begun to bridge the gap between Srinagar's urban



hospitals and the far-flung villages of Kupwara, Kulgam, and Bandipora. Yet progress remains uneven. Urban centers benefit from advanced facilities, while rural communities often lack even basic diagnostic equipment. Delays in major projects have further frustrated expectations, leaving many to wonder whether infrastructure alone can solve the crisis.

Policy reforms have added another dimension to the changing scenario. The rollout of Ayushman Bharat – Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana has extended insurance coverage to thousands of families, making treatments that were once financially devastating suddenly accessible. For many households, this has meant relief from the fear of medical bankruptcy and a renewed sense of trust in public healthcare. Universal health coverage remains a distant goal, but awareness campaigns, maternal health programs, and immunization drives have improved outcomes, particularly for women and children. The challenge lies in ensuring that these benefits reach the most marginalized communities, especially in conflict-affected zones where trust in institutions is fragile. In places where violence and uncertainty have eroded confidence in governance, even the best-designed schemes struggle

to achieve their intended impact.

Mental health has emerged as perhaps the most pressing yet least addressed issue in Kashmir's health scenario. Decades of unrest have left deep psychological scars, and anxiety, depression, and post-traumatic stress disorder affect large sections of society. Services remain inadequate, with only a handful of psychiatrists serving millions, and stigma prevents many from seeking help. Community groups and non-governmental organizations have stepped in to provide counseling and support, but the scale of the crisis demands systemic intervention. Mental health in Kashmir is not simply a medical issue; it is intertwined with identity, resilience, and survival, and its neglect threatens to undermine broader health reforms. Without a serious commitment to mental health, the valley's efforts to improve physical health outcomes will remain incomplete.

Human resources remain the missing link in this evolving picture. Infrastructure and policy reforms cannot succeed without skilled professionals to deliver care, yet Kashmir faces a severe shortage of doctors, nurses, and paramedics, particularly in rural districts. Specialists in oncology, cardiology, and neurology are scarce,

forcing patients to travel long distances or seek treatment outside the region. The phenomenon of brain drain compounds the problem, as many trained professionals migrate to other states or abroad in search of better opportunities. Efforts to expand medical education through new colleges and training programs are promising, but retention remains a challenge. Without a strategy to keep talent within the valley, the gap between infrastructure and service delivery will persist. The mismatch between growing infrastructure and limited manpower is one of the most critical obstacles to building a resilient health system.

The human dimension of these changes is visible in everyday lives. Families that once faced financial ruin due to medical expenses now find relief through insurance schemes. Patients who previously traveled hundreds of kilometers for treatment can now access services closer to home. Yet others continue to struggle with the absence of specialists, the delays in flagship projects, and the lack of mental health support. These contrasting experiences highlight the paradox of Kashmir's health scenario: progress in affordability and infrastructure, but persistent gaps in accessibility and specialized care. For every

success story of a family spared financial hardship, there is another of a patient waiting months for specialized treatment or a community left without adequate mental health support.

The future of healthcare in Kashmir depends on addressing these contradictions. Infrastructure growth, insurance coverage, and policy reforms have created a foundation, but without tackling manpower shortages, mental health, and preventive care, progress will remain incomplete. A multi-pronged approach is needed, one that strengthens medical education and retention, accelerates flagship projects, invests in preventive health campaigns to tackle non-communicable diseases, expands mental health services with community-based interventions, and bridges the urban-rural divide through telemedicine and mobile health units. Such measures would not only improve health outcomes but also restore trust in institutions and create a more resilient system. Preventive care, in particular, must become a priority, as the rising tide of lifestyle diseases cannot be stemmed by treatment alone.

The changing health scenario in Kashmir is ultimately a story of promise tempered by reality. It reflects the struggles of a people caught between tradition and modernity, conflict and peace, despair and hope. Yet it also offers a vision of healing — of a valley where hospitals hum with activity, where families no longer fear medical bankruptcy, and where mental health is treated with the seriousness it deserves. As Kashmir navigates its complex socio-political realities, the health sector stands as both a mirror and a beacon. It mirrors the challenges of a society striving to recover from decades of turmoil, and it serves as a beacon of resilience, transformation, and the enduring quest for well-being.

The increasing number of diseases in Kashmir is not merely a medical statistic; it is a reflection of the valley's changing social fabric, its evolving lifestyles, and its ongoing struggles. Addressing this challenge requires more than infrastructure and policy; it requires empathy, commitment, and a vision that places human well-being at the center of development. Only then can Kashmir move from crisis to recovery, from burden to resilience, and from despair to hope.

The author is a senior analyst and can be mailed at m.hanief@gmail.com
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Martyrs' Day Honouring Courage and Sacrifice



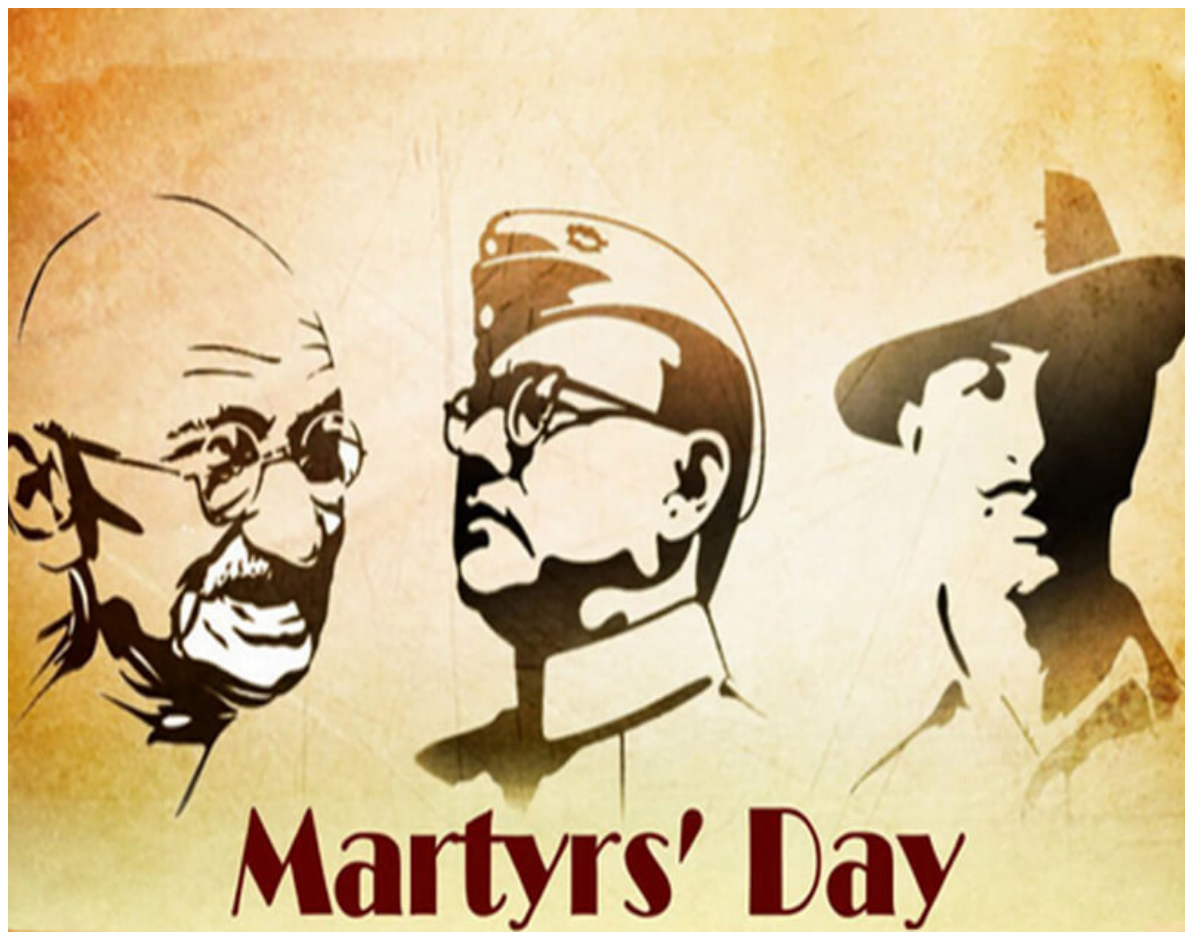
■ SHOIAB MOHAMMAD BHAT

In India, 30 January is observed as Martyrs' Day to commemorate the supreme sacrifice of Mahatma Gandhi and all those fearless individuals who laid down their lives for the country. It is a very important day in terms of emotions and history of the country because it is the day when the Father of the Nation was assassinated in 1948. In addition to the memory, the day is an effective reminder of the traditions of peace, bravery, service, and self-sacrifice, which continue to guide the spirit of India.

The life of Mahatma Gandhi was an ideal of truth, minimalism and virtue. His ideology of non-violence has transformed the freedom movement into a mass movement based on moral values. Gandhi led millions of people through peaceful protest, civil disobedience and undying faith in humanity, proving that moral strength can achieve political freedom. The assassination on 30 January 1948 was a stunning jolt to the country, which had just gotten out of the colonial regime and was trying to create a united, democratic society.

Martyrs Day honours the legacy of Gandhi and the millions of freedom fighters whose sacrifices led to the achievement of independence. Their lives were full of heroism and undying devotion to justice, dignity and self-respect. Their contributions encourage generations of people to appreciate the freedom and safeguard the principles enshrined in the Constitution.

Educational institutions such as schools and colleges play a significant role in keeping the spirit alive. Students actively participate in debates, speeches, essay competitions, and cultural programmes organised around the themes of patriotism and national values. These activities expose young minds to the vision of the freedom movement and instil in them respect for



the sacrifices made by previous generations to achieve freedom. Such awareness enhances civic consciousness and encourages young people get involved in benefiting society.

The Martyrs Day is an occasion that highlights the value of unity and social harmony. Gandhi did not confine his vision to political liberation, he also included social equality, communal harmony, and respect for the dignity of human beings. His teachings were based on compassion, tolerance, and peaceful coexistence. They are quite applicable in a multicultural country such as India. This day reminds citizens that unity and

mutual understanding are the strongest foundation for national development.

The day holds special significance for the families of martyrs, particularly those who lost their loved ones in wars, internal security operations, and peacekeeping operations. Soldiers, police personnel, and people living in the country have remained courageous and selfless to serve the nation even after independence. Martyrs Day recognises their valuable contributions and assures families that the nation will always honour and remember their sacrifices.

Beyond remembrance, it encourages introspec-

tion, urging citizens to reflect on their roles and responsibilities in a democratic society. True freedom attains meaning when it is accompanied by integrity, respect for the law, social responsibility and service to national development. The ideals of martyrs offer guidance for daily life, whether through honesty at work, service to society, or care for the environment.

Martyrs' Day connects the lessons of history with the challenges of the present. The issues faced by the nation require collaboration, strength, and moral leadership. The significance of dialogue, patience, and moral behaviour as discussed by Gandhi will always be useful in conflict resolution and plural development. His faith in the strength of common individuals remains an enduring inspiration for those working towards social reform, education, health and sustainable development.

It bridges generations, linking past sacrifices with present aspirations and future hopes. By honouring martyrs, citizens demonstrate their commitment to defending freedom and democracy. This sense of continuity strengthens national identity and responsibility.

The importance of Martyrs' Day lies in its call to action as much as in remembrance. It encourages citizens to give back to the country through professional excellence, serving society, creative expression or leadership. Patriotism becomes meaningful when translated into efforts that improve society and foster peace.

The memory of martyrs lights the path of India, guiding its journey of development and progress. Citizens are reminded that the sacrifices of those who achieved freedom were made through struggle, discipline, and moral courage. Martyrs' Day enhances appreciation for history and inspires the present and future generations to work towards a peaceful and prosperous nation.

Essentially, 30 January is a day of solemnity and hope in the national calendar. Martyrs' Day, celebrates lives devoted to the country and reaffirms the ideals that form the soul of India. Reflection, remembrance, and renewed commitment continue to unite the nation and serve as a source of inspiration for all citizens.

shoabhat2018@gmail.com



Dr. Tasaduk attends IDF Fellows Virtual Roundtable

Dr. Tasaduk Hussain Itoo, Fellow of the International Diabetes Federation (IDF) attended the IDF Fellows Virtual Roundtable, engaging with leading global experts to discuss strategies for advancing diabetes care and public health initiatives worldwide. The session provided a valuable platform for celebrating the achievements of IDF Fellows and acknowledging their role in global diabetes advocacy. The session also provided a platform for knowledge exchange



and collaborative dialogue on diabetes prevention, patient-centered care, and international cooperation.

Dr. Itoo had the honor of interacting with Prof. Peter Schwarz, President of the International Diabetes Federation, and Dr. V. Mohan, Honorary IDF Fellow and one of India's foremost diabetologists, including other global experts.

Reflecting on the engagement, Dr. Itoo emphasized the importance of global collaboration in strengthening diabetes prevention efforts and improving patient outcomes across diverse populations.

Dr. Itoo's participation underscores his continued commitment to global health advocacy, medical education, and evidence-based public health initiatives.

THE IMPORTANCE OF HYDRATION FOR GOOD HEALTH



■ DR. SURINDERPAL SINGH

Water is the most essential and abundant constituent of the human body, accounting for approximately 60-70 percent of total body weight in adults. Every physiological process, from cellular metabolism and circulation to thermoregulation and waste elimination, depends on adequate hydration. Despite its fundamental role, hydration is often neglected in modern lifestyles, leading to a wide range of health disturbances that affect physical, mental and metabolic well-being.

Hydration refers to the maintenance of an optimal balance of water within the body. Body water is distributed between intracellular and extracellular compartments, with nearly two-thirds present inside the cells and one-third outside them. This distribution is crucial for maintaining cell structure and function, facilitating enzymatic and biochemical reactions, transporting nutrients, oxygen and hormones, and regulating body temperature through sweating and respiration. Water acts as a universal solvent that enables the biochemical reactions essential for life. Even mild dehydration, involving a loss of just one to two percent of body water, can impair cognitive performance, physical capacity and cardiovascular efficiency.

One of the most critical yet underestimated roles of hydration is its contribution to detoxification and waste



removal. The kidneys serve as the primary organs responsible for eliminating metabolic waste products such as urea, creatinine, uric acid and excess electrolytes. Adequate hydration enhances the glomerular filtration rate, dilutes urine and prevents the accumulation of toxins, thereby reducing the risk of kidney stones and urinary tract infections. Chronic dehydration, on the other hand, leads to concentrated urine, increased renal workload and gradual deterioration of kidney function.

Hydration also supports hepatic and gastrointestinal health. While the liver metabolizes toxins, sufficient water intake aids liver function by facilitating bile production and transport. In the gastrointestinal tract, adequate hydration promotes bowel regularity, prevents constipation and reduces the reabsorption of toxins, while also supporting a healthy gut microbiota. In addition, the skin and sweat glands play an important role in toxin elimination. Proper hydration supports sweating, which contributes to thermoregulation and the excretion of trace toxins, and helps maintain skin elasticity and an effective protective barrier.

Adequate hydration offers broad systemic health benefits. In the cardiovascular system, it helps maintain blood volume and optimal viscosity, ensuring efficient circulation. Dehydration can result in low blood pressure and an increased risk of thrombosis. The brain is particularly sensitive to changes in hydration status, and dehydration has been linked to headaches, poor concentration, mood disturbances and impaired memory. In the musculoskeletal system, water is essential for joint lubrication and muscle contraction, reducing fatigue, preventing muscle cramps and improving physical endurance. Hydration also plays a role in metabolic and endocrine balance by supporting metabolic efficiency and insulin sensitivity, and may assist in appetite regulation and weight management.

The advantages of adequate hydration include improved kidney and liver function, efficient removal of toxins, enhanced cognitive and physical performance, healthier skin, better temperature regulation and a reduced risk of urinary, gastrointestinal and metabolic disorders. However, excessive

hydration can also pose health risks if water intake is not properly balanced. Overhydration may lead to hyponatremia, a potentially life-threatening condition caused by diluted blood sodium levels and characterized by nausea, confusion, seizures and cerebral edema. Excessive water intake without adequate electrolytes can disturb the balance of sodium, potassium and chloride, impairing neuromuscular and cardiac function. In vulnerable individuals, such as those with heart failure or chronic kidney disease, excessive fluid intake may place additional strain on the kidneys.

Medical guidelines therefore emphasize individualized hydration based on age, climate, physical activity and overall health status. Regular consumption of water throughout the day, rather than large volumes at once, monitoring urine color as an indicator of hydration status, increasing intake during heat exposure, illness or exercise, and balancing water with electrolytes when necessary are widely recommended practices.

Hydration is a cornerstone of human health, influencing nearly every physiological system in the body. Adequate water intake supports detoxification, metabolic efficiency, organ function and overall well-being. At the same time, both dehydration and overhydration carry health risks, highlighting the importance of balance and personalized hydration strategies. In an era marked by increasing lifestyle-related disorders, prioritizing proper hydration remains a simple yet powerful preventive measure firmly grounded in medical and scientific evidence.

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

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WITH Dr.SUMIT , Mr.TURAB, Former Sr. Audiologist at Max Hospital Saket ,Delhi
@ Kifayatkifi
8:00PM On January 18th , Sunday

Director RDD Jammu reviews flagship rural development schemes in Rajouri

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

RAJOURI, JAN 31: A comprehensive review meeting was held today under the chairmanship of Director Rural Development Department (RDD) Jammu, Shehnaz Akhter at the Raj Kumar Thapa Memorial Dak Bungalow Rajouri to assess the progress of key rural development schemes in the district.

The meeting was attended by the Assistant Commissioner Development (ACD) Rajouri, Auqil Naveed, Executive Engineer REW Rajouri, Block Development Officers (BDOs), Assistant Engineers (AEs) and Junior Engineers (JEs).

The Director undertook a detailed review of the performance under major flagship programmes, including MGN-REGA Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana-Gramin (PMAY-G) and Union Territory Capex works (CD & Panchayat). Emphasizing the need for faster implementation and stronger accountability, she issued specific directions to address bottlenecks, particularly in underperforming blocks.

To ensure timely benefits to workers, the BDOs were directed to significantly improve the payment of wages. BDO Plangarh and BDO Panjgrain were specifically instructed to improve the status of timely payments within 10 days. BDO Thanamandi, along with other BDOs were directed to complete Aadhaar seeding of job cards within a strict timeline



of 7 days. Any technical issues were to be immediately escalated and resolved in coordination with the MIS team. The Director also directed all BDOs to fast-track e-KYC authentication of beneficiaries.

Reviewing the progress under PMAY-G, the Director stressed the urgent completion of pending houses. BDOs were directed to complete all houses under Category-A within the 15 days and to initiate recovery of amounts in cases of default by beneficiaries. As per the latest update, 60,253 houses have been completed so far, while 1,928 houses are still pending.

Under the CD & Panchayat (Ongoing) category, 76 percent expenditure has been done. The Director asked the BDOs to resolve all pending issues, restart stalled works and ensure full comple-

tion before the end of February. In the CD & Panchayat (New) category, 98 works have been approved, of which all have been started except 10 works currently under tendering. The concerned BDOs were directed to expedite the tendering process and complete these works while also boosting overall expenditure.

Calling upon all BDOs, AEs and field functionaries to work with utmost dedication, coordination and cooperation, the Director emphasized achieving the set targets and ensuring effective delivery of rural development schemes for the benefit of the rural populace.

The meeting concluded with a renewed commitment towards transparent, timely and efficient implementation of rural development programmes in Rajouri.

Public Notice

My daughter's name has been wrongly mentioned as HANIYA MUSHTAQ in her Date of Birth certificate while her correct name is ZAINAB MUSHTAQ which needs to be corrected if anybody having any objection in this regard he/she may file his/her objection in the office of TEHSIL OFFICE WAGOORA / BDO WAGOORA within seven days from the publication of this notice after that no objection will be entertained

**NAME...MUSHTAQ AHMAD RATHER
F/O...ZAINAB MUSHTAQ**

Public Notice

It is hereby notified for the information of the general public that Mr. Ishfaq Ahmad Mir, S/o Abdul Gani Mir, R/o Bangdara Reshipora, has applied for registration of D-Class Contractor in his favour in the office of the Superintendent, R&B Division Baramulla.

If any person has any objection regarding the above, the same may be submitted in writing to the undersigned within 7 days from the date of publication of this notice. After expiry of the stipulated period, no objection shall be entertained.

**SUPERINTENDENT
R&B DIVISION BARAMULLA
DATE: 31/02/2026
PLACE: BARAMULLA**

Government Of Jammu & Kashmir Office Of The Tehsildar Kreeri

Subject: Application of NISAR AHMAD MIR S/O Lt GH MOHD MIR R/O SALOOSA for the issuance of Dependent certificate

PUBLIC NOTICE

Regarding the subject cited above in this context a report sought from patwari halqa concerned and the Death certificate issued by the competent authority reveals that GH MOHD MIR S/O AB AHAD MIR R.O SALOOSA has passed away on 29/10/1993. The report of the patwari further depicts that the deceased has left behind following dependent as tabulated below

- 1... SARWA BEGUM wife 58 years house wife widow
- 2....NAYEEM AH MIR SON 35 Years Labour married
- 3....GULSHANA BANO daughter 40 years H/W married
- 4....SALEEM AH MIR Son 32 years Labour married
- 5.....NISAR AH MIR Son 38 years Business un married

The applicant has applied for Issuance of Dependent certificate in favour of Self

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

Naib Tehsild Kreeri

Public Notice

This is certify that Gh mohiudin shah S/O Gh nabi shah R/O Aarath budg am has brake frone side number plate of motor cycle. Now he wants to apply for a new one, the braked number plate number is JK04F 1483. If any body has objection in this regard ,they will invoke Rto office budgam within the period of seven days , after completion of said period ,no objection will be entertained .

**GH MOHIUDIN SHAH
S/O ; GH NABI SHAH
R/O , AARATH BUDGAM
ADDHAR NO ; 949026298202
JK04F 1483**

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

PUBLIC NOTICE

Subject: Application of Ubaid Nazir Dar S/o Nazir Ahmad Dar, R/o Kawarigam for issuance of RBA Certificate.

Whereas, the above named applicant has applied in this office for issuance of RBA (Resident of Backward Area) Certificate in his favour. In this connection, report from the concerned Patwari Halqa has been sought, which reveals that the applicant is a resident of Village Kawarigam and falls under the notified backward area as per records.

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

Issued under my hand and seal of this office.

**By Order
Naib Tehsildar, Achabal**

Public Notice

It is hereby notified that my son's DOB has been wrongly mentioned in adhar regards bearing aadhar no 8450 0143 6209 as DOB 18/09/2008 instead of DOB 15/05/2007 as for regards now I have applying for it's correction of the same if any person have any objection in this regards may file the same to the office Block Development Office Kralgund/ adhar seva within the period of seven days from the date of publication of this notice After that no objection shall be entertained

**AKASH ASHRAF , DOB 15/05/2007
S/O MOHAMMAD ASHRAF DAR
R/O LOKIPORA TEHSIL KRALGUND
QAZIABAD DISTRICT KUPWARA**

Public Notice

It is hereby notified that my son's DOB has been wrongly mentioned in adhar regards bearing aadhar no 9683 5865 2658 as DOB 09/11/2006 instead of DOB 06/03/2009 as for regards now I have applying for it's correction of the same if any person have any objection in this regards may file the same to the office of the concerned authority/ adhar seva within the period of seven days from the date of publication of this notice After that no objection shall be entertained

**FAIZAN IBRAHEEM , DOB 06/03/2009
S/O MOHAMMAD IBRAHEEM DAR
R/O SHANOO TEHSIL LANGATE
DISTRICT KUPWARA**

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ACD Doda reviews RDD works

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

DODA, JAN 31: Assistant Commissioner Development (ACD) Doda, Din Mohd Afaqi today chaired a review meeting with the Block Development Officers (BDOs), Executive Engineer REW, AEEs, JEs and technical staff of the Rural Development Department (RDD) to assess the progress of ongoing developmental works across the district.

The ACD took a detailed review of works being executed under various schemes and emphasized early completion of all approved projects within stipulated timelines. He underscored the importance of maintaining quality standards, strict adherence to technical specifications and transparent execution of works.

The ACD held in-depth discussions on issues affecting progress, including availability of materials, site-specific challenges and inter-departmental coordination. He directed the concerned officers to remove bottlenecks promptly, ensure regular field inspections and submit timely progress reports. Special emphasis was laid on prioritizing works of public utility, proper utilization of funds and ensuring that benefits reach the grassroots level. The ACD further instructed engineers and field staff to strengthen monitoring mechanisms, avoid delays and ensure accountability at every level. He cautioned that unjustified delays and substandard work will not be tolerated and called for coordinated efforts to achieve targets efficiently.

DSWJ visits Child Care Institutions, Senior Citizens Home in Samba

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU, JAN 31: Director Social Welfare Department Jammu, Ranjeet Singh today visited various institutions functioning under the Social Welfare Department in district Samba to review facilities, service delivery and overall functioning.

During the visit, the Director inspected Parishha CCI Home for Women, Palash CCI for Boys and Muskan Foundation Senior Citizens Home. The Director interacted with the inmates, staff members and management of the institutions and took stock of living conditions, nutrition, healthcare, education, recreation facilities and safety arrangements.

The Director emphasized the importance of providing a safe, caring and dignified environment for women, children and senior citizens residing in these institutions. Directions were issued to the concerned authorities to ensure strict adherence to prescribed guidelines, timely redressal of issues and continuous improvement in the quality of services being provided.

The management of the institutions apprised the Director about ongoing activities, challenges faced and requirements for further strengthening of facilities. The Director assured all possible support from the department for the welfare and wellbeing of the beneficiaries.

The visit reflects the commitment of the Social Welfare Department towards strengthening institutional care and ensuring the holistic development and protection of vulnerable sections of society.

The Director was accompanied by District Social Welfare Officer Samba, Mohd.Nawaz and TSWO's.

MALIK FAMILY OF BEMINA - BEREAVED

With profound sorrow, the Malik Family of Bemina informs all relatives, friends, and well-wishers that

**Ghulam
Nabi Malik**

(Son of Late Mohammad
Ibrahim Malik)

Resident of Hamdaniya
Colony, Bemina, Sector-F,
Near Imam Hussain Hospital

The Chaharum of the deceased will be observed on
Monday, 2 February 2026 at 7:45 a.m.

at the ancestral graveyard, **Bemina.**

Sector A Hamdaniya Colony, Bemina (Right side Bund).

Thereafter, congregational Fateha Khawani will be held at the bereaved family's residence.

Bereaved Family:

Wilayat Hussain & Kifayat Hussain (Sons)

Contact: +91 70068 68336

May Allah (SWT) grant the departed soul Jannat-ul-Firdous and bestow patience and strength upon the bereaved family.
Ameen.

Deputy Chief Minister lays foundation stone for road upgradation in Kalakote

■ HT NEW NETWORK

RAJOURI, JANUARY 31: Deputy Chief Minister, Jammu and Kashmir, Surinder Choudhary, today laid the foundation stone for upgradation of road from Main Road Kotekabu Brehvi to Ziyarat Brehvi Baji Darbar, Kalakote.

The ceremony was held in the presence of Thakur Randhir Singh, MLA Kalakote, along with officers of the concerned departments and local residents. The upgradation work will be executed by the Public Works Department (PWD) which aims to ensure safer, smoother transportation for the people of the



area.

On the occasion, the Deputy Chief Minister congratulated the local public and said that the UT government is committed to strengthen the road infrastructure and ensuring better connectivity in remote and rural regions. He emphasized that improved roads play a vital role in boosting economic activity, accessibility to religious places, and overall development.

The locals expressed gratitude to the government for taking concrete steps towards development and improving basic infrastructure in the region.

DC Budgam reviews implementation of Social security schemes in district

■ HT NEW NETWORK

BUDGAM, JANUARY 31: Deputy Commissioner Budgam, Dr. Bilal Mohi-Ud-Din Bhat, today chaired a detailed review meeting at the DC Office Complex, Budgam, to assess the implementation of key social security and financial inclusion schemes in the district.

The meeting focused on the progress of flagship schemes including Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana (PMJDY), Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana (PMSBY), Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana (PMJJBY), and Atal Pension Yojana (APY), along with a review of ongoing financial inclusion initiatives in the district.

During the meeting, it was informed that 6791 applications have been received under Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana (PMJJBY) while Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana (PMSBY) has recorded 48,202 applications in the district. Under Atal Pension Yojana (APY), a total of 854 applications have been received so far.

The overall status of enrolment and outreach under various schemes was reviewed, with emphasis on the need to further expand coverage and reach underserved and uncovered populations across the district.

While addressing the participants, the DC underscored the critical role of financial protection and social security schemes in providing safety nets to vulnerable sections of society. He expressed concern over gaps in outreach, particularly in rural and remote areas, and stressed the need for enhanced mobilisation efforts.

The DC directed all stakeholders to intensify awareness campaigns and adopt a targeted, block-level strategy to ensure wider participation under all schemes. He instructed for the organisation of village-level camps and enrolment drives with the active involvement of Block Development



Officers, Anganwadi Workers, Common Service Centres, and Self Help Groups.

He further directed for strengthened door-to-door Information, Education and Communication (IEC) activities to reach unbanked and underbanked households. The DC also instructed for regular monitoring of scheme-wise progress through the Lead District Manager's office, with periodic updates to the DC office.

Emphasising interdepartmental coordination, the DC called for stronger convergence between banks and departments including Social Welfare, Labour, Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS), and Rural Development to ensure coordinated and effective implementation.

The DC reiterated that no eligible beneficiary should be left out of the financial safety net and directed all concerned to treat saturation of social security schemes as a priority governance objective. He stressed the need for renewed momentum through collaborative efforts, reaffirming the District Administration's commitment towards achieving comprehensive financial inclusion across Budgam district.

The meeting was attended by the Chief Planning Officer, Lead District Manager Budgam, District Social Welfare Officer, Assistant Labour Commissioner Budgam, representatives from Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS), and branch managers of public and private sector banks operating in the district.

Review meeting of DLCWPC held at Kulgam

■ HT NEW NETWORK

KULGAM, JANUARY 31: A review meeting of the District Level Child Welfare and Protection Committee (DLCWPC), Kulgam was held today under the directions of the District Magistrate, Kulgam at the Mini-Secretariat, Kulgam.

The meeting chaired by Additional District Magistrate Kulgam reviewed the overall implementation of Mission Vatsalya in the district and assessed inter-departmental coordination for strengthening child welfare, protection mechanisms and delivery of services to children in need of care and protection. Senior officers from Police, Health, Education, Social Welfare, Labour, Urban Local Bodies, Youth Services & Sports, Skill Development Department and consultant from UNICEF participated in the meeting.

The District Social Welfare Officer,



Kulgam, presented the agenda and an Action Taken Report highlighting progress achieved and challenges faced.

Emphasis was laid on effective convergence among departments, timely identification of vulnerable children, and strict implementation of child protection laws and schemes. Officers were directed to ensure coordinated efforts for safeguarding child rights and improving service delivery at the grassroots level.

■ HT NEW NETWORK

KISHTWAR, JANUARY 31: The Motor Vehicles Department (MVD), Kishtwar, in collaboration with the Transport Union, Health & AYUSH Department, J&K Bank, J&K Traffic Police and NHIDCL, on Saturday organised a comprehensive Road Safety Programme for drivers, transporters and the general public here at the Bus Stand.

The programme was chaired by the Deputy Commissioner (DC), Pankaj Kumar Sharma as the chief guest.

The initiative aimed at promoting road safety awareness, responsible driving practices and public health, while also addressing

issues related to drug abuse and promoting social responsibility among the transport operators.

A range of activities were held during the programme, including a Road Safety Signature Campaign, distribution of free first aid kits, medical and eye check-up camps and on-the-spot registration for the government Welfare Schemes (Insurance).

In recognition of exemplary service, best drivers were felicitated with appreciation certificates and driver uniforms.

Two important public campaigns—"Swachh Transport for Kishtwar" and "Be Kind to Animals" in the transport sector—were formally launched on the



occasion. Rapid drug tests were also conducted, alongside awareness sessions on safe driving practices, traffic rules and the ill effects of drug abuse.

Addressing the gathering, the Deputy Commissioner highlighted

the critical importance of road safety and responsibility of drivers in safeguarding lives. He appreciated the efforts of the Motor Vehicles Department and commended the Assistant Regional Transport Officer (ARTO) for successfully coordinating the programme and introducing impactful initiatives.

The ARTO briefed the participants about the objectives of the programme and elaborated on the various activities undertaken to enhance road safety and driver welfare in the district.

Adding a cultural and educational touch, a Nukad Natak (street play) conveying strong social messages on road safety and responsible behaviour was

presented by Aazil and team from Kishtwar Act Production, which was well received by the audience.

The programme witnessed the participation of several senior officers and stakeholders, including Cluster Head J&K Bank Khurshid Akhoun; DySP HQ, Dr. Ishan Gupta; DySP Traffic Farooq Khateeb; BMO Dr. Anil Sharma; Lead Bank Manager, DTI Traffic, MVIs and members of the local Transport Union.

The event concluded with a renewed commitment by all stakeholders to work collectively towards safer roads and a responsible transport culture in Kishtwar district.

GDC Basohli organizes Road Safety Awareness Rally to mark NRSM- 2026

■ HT NEW NETWORK

BASOHLI, JANUARY 31: To mark the observance of National Road Safety Month 2026, the Government Degree College (GDC) Basohli organised a Road Safety Awareness Rally with the objective of generating awareness among the general public regarding road safety measures and the critical importance of following traffic rules.

The rally was organised in consonance with the national theme for the year, "Sadak Suraksha – Jeevan Raksha" (Road Safety – Life Protection), which highlights the vital link between safe roads and the preservation of human life.

The NSS Unit, NCC Unit and the

Department of Physical Education coordinated the event under the overall guidance and leadership of the Principal, Prof. Raj Kiran Sharma.

A large number of students, NSS volunteers and NCC cadets participated with great enthusiasm and a strong sense of civic duty. The participants carried placards and banners displaying impactful slogans such as "Road Safety is Life Safety," "Follow Traffic Rules, Save Lives," "Speed Thrills but Kills," and "Wear Helmet, Save Life."

Through chanting of slogans and direct interaction, the participants actively sensitized the public about safe driving practices, the use of helmets and seat belts, avoidance of over speeding and respect for traffic signals.

The Road Safety Club of the College, comprising Dr. Roshan Lal, Dr. Verinder Singh, Dr. Vaishno Devi, Roshan Lal Sharma (PTI), Prof. Vishal Sharma and Prof. Mega Sharma, played a pivotal role in the successful planning and execution of the event.

The rally concluded with a road safety pledge, wherein all participants vowed to follow traffic rules in their daily lives and to act as responsible citizens by spreading awareness about road safety within their families and communities.

The event received an encouraging and positive response from the general public and succeeded in reinforcing the message that road safety is a shared and collective responsibility.



of the road, keeping in view the safety of commuters.

The administration reaffirmed its commitment to facilitating tourism in the region by improving road connectivity and ensuring hassle-free access to tourist destinations.

DC Poonch reviews status of JJM Schemes

■ HT NEW NETWORK

POONCH, JANUARY 31: Deputy Commissioner Poonch, Ashok Kumar Sharma today chaired a meeting to review the status of ongoing Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) schemes being implemented in the district.

At the outset, Executive Engineer, Jal Shakti, Vishal Thapa briefed the meeting about the total number of sanctioned schemes, their current status, including completed and ongoing works and highlighted the challenges being faced during implementation.

A detailed discussion was held on the status of water supply schemes, infrastructure augmentation, groundwater exploration and progress achieved in providing household tap connections. The meeting also



discussed proposals seeking extension of timelines for the physical completion of the schemes. The extensions have been sought due to the non-availability of funds.

The DC emphasized the need for

coordinated efforts among all concerned departments to ensure timely completion of works once funding issues are resolved.

The meeting was attended by Additional District Development Commissioner, Tahir Mustafa Malik; Chief Planning Officer, Shama-un-Ahmed; Superintending Engineer, Vipan Kumar, Divisional Forest Officer, Mushtaq Choudhary; Chief Education Officer, Mukhtar Ahmed; Chief Medical Officer, Dr. Parvaiz Ahmed Khan; Wildlife Warden Rajouri-Poonch; District Social Welfare Officer, Khalil Ahmed Bandy; besides Executive Engineer Jal Shakti, AEs and JEs from Sub-Divisions Poonch, Surankote and Mendhar, AEE Mechanical, AEs and JEs, AEE and JE Ground Water and other concerned officers.

Snow clearance in full swing on road leading to tourist spot Guldanda- Bhaderwah

■ HT NEW NETWORK

BHADERWAH, JANUARY 31: Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC) Bhaderwah Sunil Kumar Bhutyal today inspected the pace of ongoing snow clearance work on the road leading to the popular tourist spot Guldanda.

During the visit, the ADC reviewed the progress of snow removal and directed the concerned departments to expedite the clearance work to facilitate smooth movement of tourists and locals.

The ADC was accompanied by SDPO Naveed Shokat Qazi, officials from BRO (Border Roads Organisation), the concerned JEE and other departmental officers. The officers were instructed to maintain coordination and ensure timely clearance

Handicraft Service Centre organizes "Chaupal" – Artisans' Meet at Ramban

■ HT NEW NETWORK

RAMBAN, JANUARY 31: The Handicraft Service Centre, (GOI) in collaboration with the district administration Ramban today organized a "Chaupal" (Artisans' Meet) at Aspirational district Ramban for promoting craft awareness, youth engagement and entrepreneurship development in the handicrafts sector.

Deputy Commissioner Ramban, Mohammad Alyas Khan presided over the programme, witnessed enthusiastic participation of local artisans, female folk, craftsmen and youth associated with traditional handicrafts.

DDC Member, AD Handicraft

Service Centre GOI, AD Handicraft & Handloom, LDM and other officers were present.

Addressing the gathering, the Deputy Commissioner emphasized the importance of preserving traditional crafts while adopting modern tools and market linkages to enhance income and livelihood opportunities for artisans. He assured full support from the district administration in promoting handicrafts and strengthening artisan welfare in the district.

The Deputy Commissioner highlighted the significance of the Chaupal and said that it provided a common platform for artisans to connect with officials and gain detailed information about various

facilities and schemes available under the National Handicrafts Development Programme of the Government of India. The participants were apprised of opportunities related to fairs and exhibitions, skill upgradation, improved tools, Handicrafts Mudra Loan, Common Facility Centres and marketing support.

Officials from the Handicraft Service Centre and office of the Development Commissioner (Handicrafts), Ministry of Textiles GOI, informed the artisans about the registration process with the Office of the Development Commissioner (Handicrafts) and the documents required for availing benefits under different schemes.

Information was also shared regarding participation in prestigious marketing platforms such as Dilli Haat, Craft Bazaar and Gandhi Shilp Bazaar, training programmes, e-commerce and GeM portal registration and eligibility for national and state-level awards.

During the programme, artisans were also made aware about the support services such as Shilp Mitra, Handicraft Helpline and the role of State and Central Government agencies working for the welfare of the handicrafts sector. A hands-on demonstration on handicraft creation was also conducted under the guidance of master trainers, giving participants practical exposure.



NASA, Axiom Space finalise agreement for private astronaut mission to ISS in 2027

■ UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

CHENNAI, JAN 31 : The US space agency NASA and the US-based Axiom Space have signed a mission order for the fifth private astronaut mission (PAM) to the International Space Station, marking the agency's fifth consecutive PAM award to the company.

Axiom Mission 5 (Ax-5) is targeted to launch no earlier than January 2027 from NASA's Kennedy Space Center in Florida. The mission is expected to remain docked to the space station for up to 14 days.

Crew members for Ax-5 are pending final contractual arrangements, as well as agency and international approvals, and will be announced at a later date.

"We are honoured that NASA awarded Axiom Space its fifth human spaceflight mission," said Dr. Jonathan Cirtain, President and CEO of Axiom Space. "All four previous missions have expanded the global community of space explorers, diversified scientific research in microgravity, and generated insights that are directly benefiting the development of Axiom Station, our next-generation commercial space station."

Cirtain added that the award highlights Axiom Space's commitment to expanding access to space, advancing international collaboration, and enabling research opportunities in low-Earth orbit



for the benefit of all.

As part of the mission, Axiom Space has selected Voyager Technologies, Inc. as a teammate, with responsibilities focused on payload integration.

"Voyager's role on Ax-5 reflects a proven mission-management heritage built through years of supporting commercial payloads aboard the space station," said Dylan Taylor, Chairman and CEO of Voyager Technologies. "We are proud to partner with Axiom Space on Ax-5 as commercial low-Earth orbit destinations evolve into sustained operational environments."

Taylor noted that missions such as Ax-5 demonstrate the value of integrated execution across human spaceflight, research payloads, and the

commercial infrastructure shaping the future space economy.

As the United States transitions from government-led to commercially enabled space operations, Axiom Space remains one of the few companies with demonstrated human spaceflight experience positioned to lead this shift.

Over the past four years, Axiom Space has successfully completed four missions to the International Space Station, flying 14 private and government astronauts. These missions supported more than 160 scientific and research activities, along with over 100 outreach and media engagements conducted in orbit.

Previous Axiom missions were commanded by retired NASA astronauts Michael López-Alegría,

Axiom Space Chief Astronaut, and Peggy Whitson, Vice President of Human Spaceflight at Axiom Space.

The missions achieved several historic milestones, including the first female Saudi astronaut and the first Turkish astronaut to travel to space, as well as the first astronauts from Saudi Arabia, India, Poland, and Hungary to live and work aboard the International Space Station.

It may be recalled that last year, Indian Air Force officer Shubhanshu Shukla was part of the Ax-4 mission which realised the return to human spaceflight for India, Poland and Hungary with each nation's first government-sponsored flight in more than 40 years. While Ax-4 marks these countries' second human spaceflight mission in history, it became the first time all three nations executed a mission on board the International Space Station.

According to Axiom Space, research conducted during these missions has produced groundbreaking results, including advancements in diabetes research through real-time glucose monitoring and insulin delivery in microgravity, and cancer research involving a therapeutic drug that entered clinical trials last year.

These efforts contributed to the establishment of the Axiom Space University Alliance in 2025, which identifies key scientific opportunities and helps coordinate global research priorities. UNI

Heritage Aviation sings contract for Airbus H130 helicopter at Wings India in Hyderabad

■ UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

HYDERABAD, JAN 31 : India-based helicopter operator Heritage Aviation Pvt Ltd has signed a contract for one Airbus H130 helicopter to further expand heli-pilgrimage and regional connectivity operations under the Government of India's (Ude desh ka aam nagrik) UDAN scheme.

The contract was signed at Wings India 2026 with the delivery scheduled for September 2026, Airbus, a leading aircraft manufacturer said in a release here on Friday.

The newly contracted H130 will be deployed for passenger transportation, heli-pilgrimage and regional connectivity missions, complementing Heritage Aviation's existing fleet of Airbus H125 and H130 helicopters currently operating under the UDAN scheme.

"The helicopter industry in India is witnessing strong tailwinds due to the Government of India's favourable policies and strong demand environment.

The new H130 will be used to expand our regional connectivity footprint in other areas including North East India, which largely remains virgin territory for private helicopter operations," said Rohit Mathur, Founder and CEO, Heritage Aviation Pvt. Ltd.

"Heritage Aviation has been instrumental in bridging the last mile connectivity gap, which only helicopters can effectively do across India's remote and hard-to-access terrains.

This new addition will not only expand heli-pilgrimage routes in the country but also support the Government of India's ambitions to widen the regional connectivity network. Airbus Helicopters remains committed to developing the critical parapublic market with the right products and



through our long-term partnership with India," said Sunny Guglani, Head of Airbus Helicopters in India and South Asia.

Known for its high performance, economic efficiency, reliability and comfort, the H130 is a single-engine helicopter that is widely used for sightseeing, charter and passenger transport missions.

Featuring a spacious cabin that can accommodate a pilot and up to seven passengers, the H130 combines advanced avionics, state-of-the-art systems and efficient performance, making it well suited for operations in environmentally sensitive and mountainous regions.

Heritage Aviation has been at the forefront of strengthening helicopter connectivity in India, particularly in the state of Uttarakhand.

"The operator offers services across segments, such as heli-tourism, aerial services, rescue missions and major disaster-relief operations.

The company has been among the first private operators to operationalise challenging routes such as Dehradun-Pithoragarh and Haldwani-Munsyari, improving access to remote and underserved regions. UNI

"RIICO Delegation Visits TGIIC to Study Telangana's Industrial & IT Infra

■ UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

HYDERABAD, JAN 31 : A high-level delegation from the Rajasthan State Industrial Development & Investment Corporation Ltd (RIICO), led by Ms. Shivangi Swarnkar, IAS, Managing Director, RIICO, conducted an extensive study tour of Telangana's premier industrial and IT hubs here on Friday.

The visit aimed at understanding the best practices adopted by the Telangana Industrial Infrastructure Corporation (TGIIC) that have positioned the state as a global destination for investment.



The delegation visited landmark locations, including HITEC City, Mindspace, Genome Valley, and the Electronic Manufacturing Clusters (EMC) at Raviryal and Maheshwaram (E-City).

Following the field visits, the delegation held a high-level meeting at the TGIIC Head Office with K. Shashanka, VC & MD, TGIIC, and senior HODs.

During the interaction, K. Shashanka briefed the Rajasthan officials on the "Telangana Rising: Vision 2047" initiative.

He highlighted how the state is transitioning toward a "USD 3 trillion" economy to ensure balanced regional development.

He attributed the state's industrial success to the dynamic leadership of Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy and the visionary guidance of Minister for Industries, IT & Commerce, D. Sridhar Babu.

The RIICO MD, Ms. Shivangi Swarnkar, expressed appreciation for TGIIC streamlined processes in land management and infrastructure maintenance, noting that Telangana's IT and Life Sciences ecosystems serve as a benchmark for other states in India. UNI

DFS secy chairs review meeting on RRB's performance

■ UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, JAN 31 : The Department of Financial Services (DFS) on Friday reviewed the performance of Regional Rural Banks (RRBs) in the current financial year, with the Secretary, DFS, chairing a high-level meeting here, an official statement said on Friday.

The review highlighted strong growth momentum, with the combined business of RRBs crossing the Rs 12 lakh crore mark so far in FY26.

The meeting was attended by

chairpersons of all 28 RRBs along with senior officials from NABARD, sponsor banks and other key financial institutions.

The performance review covered business growth, profitability, asset quality and progress in financial inclusion initiatives up to December 2025.

RRBs now operate through a network of more than 22,000 branches spread across 26 states and three union Territories.

Collectively, these banks serve over 32 crore deposit accounts and more than 3 crore loan accounts, underlining their critical role in



providing banking services in rural and semi-urban areas, the finance ministry statement added.

Provisional figures indicate that RRBs recorded a net profit of

Rs 7,720 crore during the current financial year so far, improving upon last year's performance.

The review also noted a continued improvement in asset quality, with both gross and net non-performing assets registering a decline, reflecting better credit monitoring and recovery efforts.

The banks' contribution to financial inclusion remained a key focus area, with over 45 lakh new Jan Dhan accounts opened during FY26.

RRBs were also commended for expanding credit to priority sectors such as agriculture, micro

and small enterprises, self-help groups and rural entrepreneurs.

During the meeting, the DFS Secretary stressed the need for further strengthening of digital banking infrastructure, wider adoption of technology-driven services and improvement in customer grievance redressal systems.

RRBs were also advised to diversify their loan portfolios, enhance operational efficiency and continue outreach in remote and underserved regions, while maintaining financial discipline and stability. UNI

CREDAI Hyderabad welcomes Economic Survey 2025-26, calls for capital and housing reforms

■ UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

HYDERABAD, JAN 31 : The Confederation of Real Estate Developers' Associations of India (CREDAI) Hyderabad on Friday welcomed the Economic Survey 2025-26, saying it reaffirms Hyderabad's position as a key engine of India's urban and economic growth.

The Survey projects 7.4 per cent GDP growth for FY26, backed by strong gross fixed capital formation nearing 30 per cent of GDP, robust services sector growth of 9.1 per cent, and fiscal consolidation with the deficit around 4.8 per cent.

It also highlights strong momentum in financial, real estate and professional services, which grew by 9.9 per cent in the first half of FY26, while construction expanded by 7.4 per cent.

CREDAI Hyderabad noted that the city's growth is marked by simultaneous core densification and rapid peripheral expansion, underlining the need for



infrastructure, mobility and utilities to keep pace with urban expansion.

Commenting on the Survey, Jagannath Rao Bandari, President-elect of CREDAI Hyderabad, said sustaining this momentum requires predictable regulations, contextual compliance and trust-based governance to address constraints related to land, mobility and infrastructure.

The association also flagged the high cost of capital as a key constraint and called for risk-mitigation tools, partial credit guarantees and improved access to long-term finance to support

housing across segments. Ahead of the union Budget 2026, CREDAI Hyderabad sought continued thrust on infrastructure funding, support for PMAY 2.0, single-window clearances and tax reforms to improve housing affordability and boost homeownership.

Reiterating its commitment to reform-led growth and sustainable urban development, CREDAI Hyderabad said it looks forward to policies that strengthen Hyderabad's contribution to India's USD 5 trillion economy, according to a statement. UNI



SBI strengthens its trade and international banking operation with opening of GTFC in Kolkata

■ UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, JAN 31 : State Bank of India (SBI) has strengthened its trade finance and international banking operations with the launch of a Global Trade Finance Centre (GTFC) in Kolkata, an official statement said here on Friday.

The new facility supports SBI branches in the region by enabling faster turnaround times, enhanced compliance oversight and a smoother customer experience for businesses involved in domestic and cross-border trade.

By integrating advanced technology with specialised expertise, the bank is seeking to raise efficiency and service standards in trade finance operations.

The GTFC operates with a workforce of 277 professionals, including 161 SBI employees, 105 outsourced staff and 11 temporary personnel.



All outsourced and temporary positions have been filled locally, with 61 per cent of the total workforce—169 employees—drawn from West Bengal, highlighting the bank's focus on local employment generation.

Since 2024, the centre has contributed Rs 1.40 crore in GST to the State of West Bengal. The establishment of the GTFC reflects SBI's broader strategy to strengthen operational capabilities while supporting India's growing global trade ecosystem, it added. UNI

SAIL records 60 Pc jump in profit on higher volumes and improved efficiency

■ UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, JAN 31 : State-owned Maharatna, Steel Authority of India Limited (SAIL) on Friday reported a strong improvement in its financial performance for the nine months ended December 31, 2025 (9M FY '26), supported by higher sales volumes, better operating efficiency and tighter cost controls, an official statement said here.

The company said crude steel production during the period rose by 2 per cent to 14.35 million tonnes from 14.08 million tonnes a year earlier, reflecting stable plant operations. Sales volumes recorded



a sharper rise of 16.3 per cent, aided by greater outreach to retail and institutional customers, faster inventory liquidation and improved market penetration.

Revenue from operations increased in line with volume

growth, rising to Rs 79,997 crore in 9M FY'26 from Rs 73,162 crore in the corresponding period of the previous year. Operating performance also strengthened, with EBITDA improving to Rs 8,384 crore from Rs 7,983 crore.

Profitability saw a marked improvement during the period.

Profit before exceptional items and tax rose to Rs 2,349 crore, while profit before tax increased to Rs 2,010 crore from 1,445 crore a year ago. Profit after tax surged by around 60 per cent to Rs 1,554 crore in 9M FY'26, compared with Rs 970 crore in the year-ago period, underscoring gains from higher volumes, operating leverage and prudent financial management.

SAIL also made progress on balance sheet strengthening, with its debt reducing to nearly Rs 5,000 crore during the nine-month period. Commenting on the results, SAIL

Chairman and Managing Director Amarendra Prakash said the company delivered a significant improvement in profitability driven by robust domestic demand, improved market reach and higher volumes. He added that despite volatility in input costs and a competitive pricing environment, the company sustained operating profitability through product mix optimisation, cost discipline and efficiency measures.

The results highlight SAIL's focus on strengthening operational performance and improving financial resilience amid challenging market conditions. UNI





■ **UNITED NEWS NETWORK**

LONDON: South Africa batter David Miller has been "medically cleared" to play in the 2026 T20 World Cup after suffering a groin injury during the SA20. He did not play in Paarl Royals' last two matches, both playoffs, and was rested from the ongoing T20I series against West Indies, but will depart with the rest of the squad to India to play in his sixth T20 World Cup.

Miller is the most experienced member of South Africa's squad and a key part of the batting line-up. He is most likely to slot in at No.5, after Quinton d Kock, Aiden Markram, Ryan Rickelton and Dewald Brevis and will play the role of the finisher. Jason Smith and Tristan Stubbs are the other two specialist batters in the South African squad.

Though Miller has not said it, at 36 years old, this could be his last T20 World Cup. He is on a white-ball only contract with Cricket South Africa and may be eyeing the home ODI World Cup in 2027 as a swansong. Miller was crucial in South Africa's previous ODI World Cup campaign, when he scored a century in the semi-final against Australia in Kolkata in 2023. He also took South Africa to the brink of a maiden T20 World Cup trophy in Barbados in 2024 but was caught on the boundary with 16 runs to get in the final over as South Africa lost to India by seven runs. He has long expressed a desire to go one further and injury will not keep him out of this attempt.

South Africa have already had to make two injury-forced replacements to the squad they announced earlier this month. Donovan Ferreira, suffered a broken shoulder in the SA20 while Tony de Zorzi did not recover from a hamstring tear. They were replaced by Stubbs and Rickelton respectively. It is not known who was in the running if Miller had been ruled out but Rubin Hermann, the batter who was added to the squad as cover for the first T20I against West Indies series, would have been the likeliest.

The South Africa squad will leave Johannesburg for Mumbai on Sunday and play a warm-up game against India on Wednesday. Their first match of the T20 World Cup is against Canada on February 9, followed by fixtures against Afghanistan (February 11 in Ahmedabad), New Zealand (February 14 in Ahmedabad), and UAE (February 18 in Delhi).

David Miller 'medically cleared' for 2026 T20 World Cup

Most experienced South Africa batter set for sixth T20 World Cup



Harmanpreet and Devine take back WPL 2026 Orange and Purple Caps

■ **ESPNCRICINFO**

MUMBAI: The Gujarat Giants (GG) vs Mumbai Indians (MI) contest, which GG won to enter the WPL 2026 Eliminator, had 232 runs and 11 wickets. Enough to give us new Orange and Purple Cap holders. Here's how.

Orange Cap leaderboard

Nat Sciver-Brunt and Smriti Mandhana, one and two before Harmanpreet Kaur got going on Friday, are now two and three, with Harmanpreet's 82 not out in 48 balls failing to prevent a loss for her team, MI, but taking her 21 runs clear at the top of the Orange Cap table. She now has 342 runs from eight innings, with team-mate Sciver-Brunt on 321 from seven, and RCB's Man-



dhana on 290 from eight.

Making up the top five are Meg Lanning of UP Warriorz (UPW), with 248 runs, and a chance of moving higher on Saturday night when her team takes on Delhi Capitals (DC) in the final league-stage game of the season, and Ash Gardner, who scored 46 in GG's win.

Purple Cap leaderboard

GG's Sophie Devine had lost the Purple Cap to RCB's Nadine de Klerk just the previous night but snatched it right back after returning 2 for 23 against MI. She now has 17 wickets for the season. De Klerk is at No. 2 with 15, and is followed by Amelia Kerr, the MI bowler who picked up 2 for 26 against GG to get to 14 for the season, the same as DC's Nandani Sharma. Joint on 12 wickets behind them are RCB's Lauren Bell and DC's N Shree Charani.

PATHIRANA: 'MY BODY JUST AUTOMATICALLY CHANGED THE RELEASE POINT' AFTER INJURY

■ **UNITED NEWS OF INDIA**

PALLEKELE: If there was one positive from Sri Lanka's defeat to England in the first T20I, it was how well their bowlers kept England's batters in check on a batter-friendly surface. Particularly Matheesha Pathirana.

Pathirana, the 23-year-old slinger, returned figures of 1 for 18 across his four overs - and it might have been two had Pathum Nissanka not grassed a chance in the deep - but his impact was immense, as evident in ESPNcricinfo's MVP index, where he was only behind Adil Rashid, whose 3 for 19 ripped through Sri Lanka's bat-

ting. The target of 134 off 17 overs (later revised to 115 in 15) proved too low to defend, but the margin of defeat - 11-runs via DLS - was not as wide as it might have been given the nature of the pitch.

On a good batting surface, seamers in particular suffered - Sam Curran and Eshan Malinga went at around 12 an over, while Jofra Archer and Jamie Overton both went at over seven. But Pathirana ticked along at an economy rate of 4.5. He did so bowling his entire repertoire, from quick Yorkers - he was hovering in the mid-140s, with his quickest delivery clocking 148kph - to pace-off length deliveries and spicy short ones.



Even more impressive was the fact that he bowled two of his overs inside the powerplay. Pathirana is renowned for his death-over exploits, but here, with a sub-par total to defend, Sri Lanka called on their strike bowler to take the new ball.

"Even though I've practiced to bowl in the powerplay, there was no plan as such for me to bowl there today," Pathirana said after the game. "It just so happened that our score was lower than we wanted, so it was decided that I would bowl in the powerplay."

Pathirana's control was impressive. Wides have been an issue in the past - a common trade-off for

a slinging action such as his - but on Friday night, there were just three across his spell.

"Honestly I didn't do anything major, just simple, basic things. The main thing was increasing the number of repetitions in practice. If there is any improvement, that's the reason"

"Over the last year, year-and-a-half, along with my injuries, it was a challenging period," he said. "I lost my rhythm. I've worked very hard to get back to this level. And then more recently Mali aiya [Lasith Malinga] was here in Sri Lanka helping out, as well all the coaches at SLC - not just one - all of them helped me get here."



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