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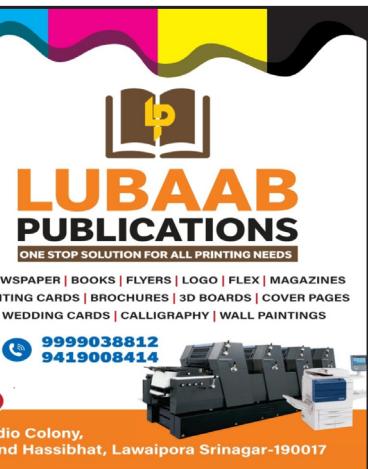
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# HEADLINES TODAY

Voice To The Voiceless



## Road Safety First

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Department of Information &amp; Public Relations, J&amp;K

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DIPK: 10618/25 | Dated: 03-02-2026

## Terror Plot Foiled in Jammu Region: Three Jaish Militants Killed in Twin Encounters

Swift, Intelligence-Driven Operations in Udhampur and Kishtwar  
Yield Major Success; Arms Cache Recovered

■ HT NEWS DESK /  
AGENCIES

JAMMU, FEB 4: Security forces on Wednesday achieved a significant counter-terror breakthrough by eliminating three terrorists affiliated with the Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM) outfit in two separate encounters in Udhampur and Kishtwar districts of Jammu and Kashmir.



Officials said two terrorists were killed in a fierce gun battle in the Jophar forest area of Basantgarh in Udhampur after a joint team of the Army, Jammu and Kashmir Police (JKP) and the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) launched an intelligence-based operation on Tuesday evening. The encounter erupted around 4 pm when troops

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## Night Temperatures Dip Below Freezing Point In Gulmarg, Pahalgam

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, FEB 4: Night temperatures in tourist resorts of Gulmarg and Pahalgam in Kashmir fell several degrees below freezing point, while the rest of the valley enjoyed a warmer night, officials said on Wednesday.

Gulmarg, the popular ski resort located in the Baramulla district of north Kashmir, recorded a low of minus 8.0 degrees Celsius, marking a drop of 2.7 degrees compared to Tuesday

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## 'J&K Fights Cancer': CM Omar Abdullah Assures World-Class Care for Patients

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU, FEB 4: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Tuesday reaffirmed the Jammu and Kashmir Government's firm commitment to delivering comprehensive and high-quality health-care services for cancer patients, stressing that early detection, advanced treatment facilities and financial support form the cornerstone of the

administration's anti-cancer strategy. Addressing a World Cancer Day programme at Government Medical College (GMC), Jammu, organised under the theme 'J&K Fights Cancer', the Chief Minister said the Government is working relentlessly to upgrade medical infrastructure and ensure that cancer care within the Union Territory matches the highest national standards.

Sharing deeply personal reflections, Omar Abdullah spoke about the emotional trauma, physical suffering and financial distress experienced by cancer patients and their families. He said the fear associated with the disease is intensified by the uncertainty of outcomes and the heavy cost of treatment, especially for economically weaker sections.

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## Over 2.5 Crore Aadhaar Numbers Deactivated in Nationwide Clean-Up Drive

UIDAI Steps up Efforts to Prevent Identity Fraud, Strengthen Welfare Delivery Systems

■ HT NEWS DESK / AGENCIES

NEW DELHI, FEB 4: In a major move to curb identity fraud and

ensure transparency in the delivery of welfare benefits, the Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) has deactivated more than 2.5 crore

Aadhaar numbers belonging to deceased persons, the government informed Parliament on Wednesday.

Minister of State for Electronics and Information Technology Jitin Prasada, in a written reply to the Lok Sabha, said Aadhaar is the largest biometric identity system in the world, with nearly 134 crore active users. He said the large-scale

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## CS pushes for time-bound, result-oriented implementation of Traffic Plans

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU, FEB 04: Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo, today chaired a meeting of the Multi-Disciplinary Committee (MDC) on Traffic Management Systems for Jammu and Srinagar cities to review plans and proposals aimed at easing congestion, strengthening road safety, and improving overall



urban mobility in the twin capital cities.

The meeting was attended by senior administrative and police officers, including Additional Chief Secretaries of Tourism and Public Works Departments; Principal Secretary, Home; Commissioner Secretary, Housing & Urban

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## CS Seeks Public Participation to Preserve Manuscripts

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU, FEB 04: Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo, today impressed upon the Culture Department to actively involve people and encourage them to come forward for the identification, digitization, and preservation of rare manuscripts for posterity under the Government of India's flagship programme Mission Gyan Bharatam.

Chairing a high-level review meeting on the implementation of the Mission in the Union Territory, the Chief Secretary emphasized that public participation is critical for safeguarding India's rich manuscript heritage, much of which is privately held or housed in religious and traditional institutions.

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## REVIVE CARE

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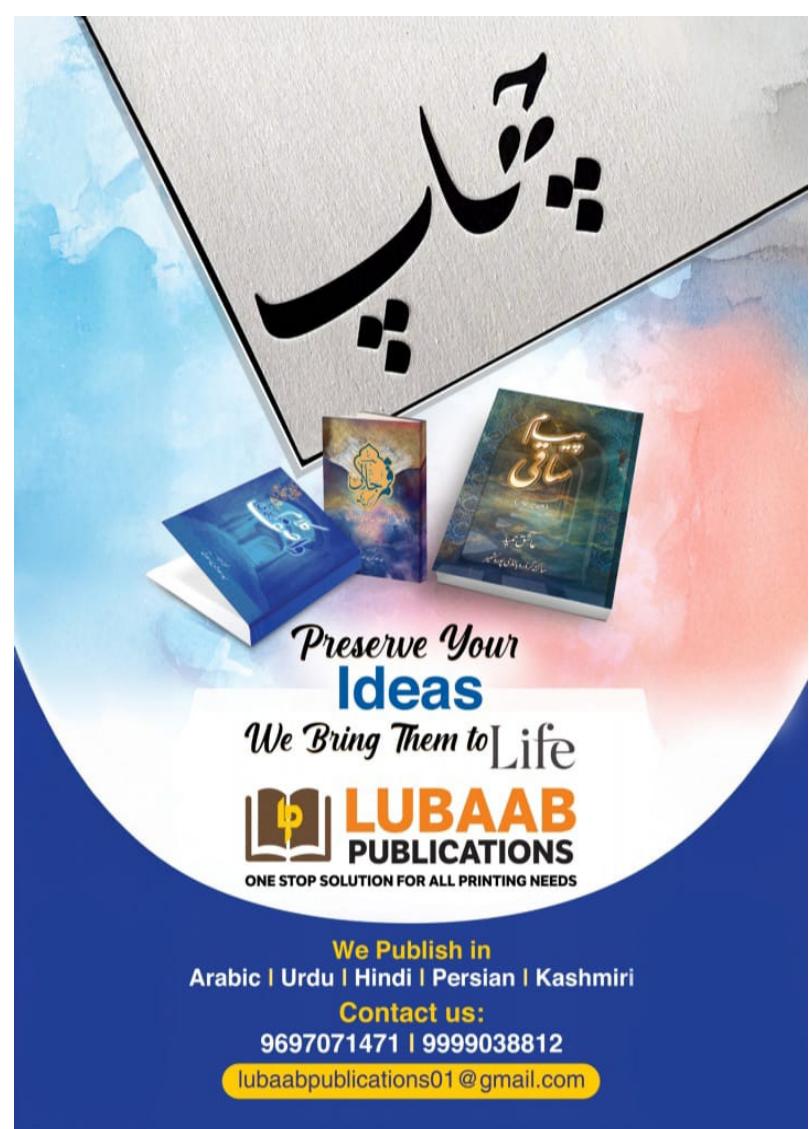
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## DC Srinagar reviews progress in saturation under key social security and welfare schemes

Stresses door-to-door outreach and inter-departmental coordination to cover every eligible beneficiary

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

**SRINAGAR FEB 04:** Deputy Commissioner (DC) Srinagar, Akshay Labroo today reviewed the progress on the saturation of various Government flagship schemes in the Rural Blocks of the district in a meeting held at Meeting Hall of the DC Office Complex.

The meeting was attended by Chief Planning Officer, Fayaz Ahmad Dar; Assistant Commissioner Development, Tariq Ahmad Reshi; District Social Welfare Officer, Dr Mukhtar Ahmad, all Block Development Officers, Zonal Medical Officers, District Agriculture Officer, LDM(Banks), District Coordinator CSC and other Officer.

The meeting focused on ensuring coverage of every eligible beneficiary under various beneficiary-oriented government schemes related to social welfare, livelihood, agriculture and farmer welfare, housing, employment



generation, and other public welfare initiatives.

The DC also reviewed Block wise progress achieved under the saturation of schemes including PM-KUSUM, PM Fasal Bima Yojana, ABHA registration, PM Shram Yojana, Vay Vandana, ISSS, NSAP, and other flagship schemes.

During the meeting, the DC was apprised of block-wise achievements made under the saturation campaign across various Rural Development Blocks of Srinagar district, including Harwan, Khonmoh, Srinagar, and Qamarwari. Detailed discussion was held to enhance the efforts undertaken to ensure maximum outreach and enrolment of eligible beneficiaries under different government-sponsored schemes.

On the Occasion, the DC emphasised the need to intensify grassroots-level outreach through door-to-door surveys and proactive service delivery to bridge existing gaps in coverage.

All Block Development Officers

were directed to ensure efficient and effective implementation of all Government flagship and citizen-centric schemes so that every eligible household and individual is covered under the respective welfare schemes, leaving no beneficiary behind.

The DC laid special emphasis on organising effective awareness camps in all Panchayat blocks of the district, particularly for schemes like Vay Vandana and PM Shram Yogi Maandhan scheme. He stressed upon BDOs to conduct regular field visits in their respective areas, interact with the people and sensitise them about the benefits of these schemes.

The DC also underscored the importance of strengthened coordination among line departments and Block-level officers. He instructed all concerned Officers to work with renewed focus, dedication and accountability to achieve saturation targets within the stipulated time frame.

**BSF Commandant SP Anand Honours Adv. Saika Rashid for Exceptional Humanitarian Service in J&K**

IHRO J&K Head Felicitated as Overall Top Civil Performer for impactful work in border and frontier regions

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

**BANDIPORA, FEB 05:** Commandant SP Anand of the 62 Battalion, Border Security Force (BSF), North Frontier, on Wednesday felicitated Advocate Saika Rashid, Head of Law and Legal Affairs, International Human Rights Organisation (IHRO), Jammu and Kashmir Chapter, in recognition of her outstand-



ing contribution to civil society and humanitarian service.

Advocate Saika Rashid was honoured with the title of Overall Top Civil Performer for her consistent and impactful efforts as a social activist and human rights advocate, particularly in some of the most sensitive frontier and border areas of Jammu and Kashmir.

Over the years, she has played a pivotal role in organising and supporting medical camps in remote border regions, ensuring access to essential healthcare for civilians while also extending support to security personnel deployed in challenging terrains. Her initiatives have significantly contributed to strengthening civil-security cooperation and community welfare.

Adv. Saika Rashid also played an active role in social outreach programmes linked to the Wular Half Marathon 2025 and led Adv. Saika's Camp in collaboration with the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) under the banner of IHRO, focusing on humanitarian assistance and community development. Additionally, she organised an eye check-up camp in Sonwara in association with civil society groups, further deepening grassroots-level health engagement.

A well-known human rights activist, Adv. Saika Rashid has dedicated herself to the welfare of both civilians and uniformed personnel across Jammu and Kashmir, earning widespread respect for her people-centric and nation-building initiatives.

The felicitation by Commandant SP Anand stands as a tribute to her unwavering commitment to humanitarian service, legal advocacy, and social empowerment in some of the most challenging regions of the Union Territory.

### Ehsaas Foundation Launches 'Ehsaas-e-Sukhan' in Kashmir

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

**SRINAGAR FEB 04:** Ehsaas Foundation has proudly launched Ehsaas-e-Sukhan, a new literary initiative aimed at nurturing and promoting young poetic voices across the Kashmir Valley. With the tagline "A Celebration of Poetry & Expression," the platform has been conceived as an open-mic space where emerging poets, writers, and artists can freely share their words, emotions, and stories in a supportive and creative environment.

Ehsaas-e-Sukhan will focus on language, literature, poetry, and folk art, with a special emphasis on encouraging new and unheard voices. The initiative seeks to revive literary culture while creating opportunities for young artists to showcase their



### IUST Launches Two-Day Programme to Boost Administrative Excellence

Capacity building initiative focuses on governance reforms, financial rules and digital tools for efficient institutional management

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

**AWANTIPORA, FEB 04:** The Islamic University of Science and Technology (IUST) on Wednesday launched a two-day Capacity Building Programme aimed at strengthening administrative efficiency, transparency and institutional governance across the university.

The programme, organised by the Centre for Good Governance and Policy Analysis (CGG&PA) in coordination with the Office of the Registrar, was inaugurated at the Rumi Library Conference Room by Vice-Chancellor Prof Dr Shakeel Ramshoo, who underscored the critical role of skilled administration in modern educational institutions.

Emphasising accountability and transparency, Prof Ramshoo said that a strong grasp of administrative rules, regulatory frameworks and the effective use of digital tools is essential for ensuring sustainable institutional growth. He stressed that continuous upskilling of administrative personnel is key to delivering efficient services and improving governance standards.

Registrar IUST, Prof Wahid Makhdoomi, in his address, highlighted the importance of continuous capacity building in enhancing service delivery, streamlining processes and



achieving better administrative outcomes. He noted that such initiatives play a vital role in creating a responsive and rule-based institutional ecosystem.

Earlier, Director CGG&PA, Dr G N Ittoo, in his welcome address, said the programme is part of a long-term strategy to strengthen governance mechanisms at IUST. He added that CGG&PA will continue to organise thematic training programmes focusing on efficiency, compliance and technology-driven governance.

Participants include Deans, officers and Heads of Departments, reflecting the university's commitment to fostering a culture of excellence, accountability and innovation in administration.

Scheduled for February 4 and 5, the programme features expert sessions on managerial skills, secretariat procedures and e-Office systems on the first day, while the second day will focus on financial regulations, treasury procedures and e-procurement through the Government e-Marketplace (GeM).

Participants include Deans, officers and Heads of Departments, reflecting the university's commitment to fostering a culture of excellence, accountability and innovation in administration.

### DIG South Kashmir Inaugurates 10-Day Specialized Training Programme for Investigating Officers

■ FAROOQ RATHER

**ANANTNAG, FEB 04:** Deputy Inspector General (DIG) of Police, South Kashmir Range, Shri Javed Iqbal Mattoo, IPS, on Monday inaugurated a 10-day specialized training programme for Investigating Officers at the District Police Office (DPO), Anantnag.

The inaugural function was attended by Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Anantnag, Shri Amritpal Singh, along with Deputy Directors of Prosecution (DDP) from Anantnag, Kulgam and Shopian districts.

The training programme has been designed to strengthen the professional and investigative capabilities of police officers by



providing them in-depth exposure to critical and emerging areas of criminal investigation. During the course, participating officers will receive specialized training on key legislations and subjects, including the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA), Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act, terror financing, digital forensics, economic offences, and other related investigative domains.

To ensure the effective and successful conduct of the programme, expert resource persons and specialized faculty members have been engaged to deliver lectures and practical inputs on various aspects of investigation and prosecution.

Speaking on the occasion, DIG South Kashmir emphasized the importance of continuous training and capacity building of investigating officers to keep pace with evolving crime patterns and legal complexities. He said the programme aims to enhance professional competence, investigative skills, and legal understanding, enabling officers to deal more effectively with complex, sensitive and technologically driven crimes.

The training initiative reflects the commitment of South Kashmir Police towards improving the quality of investigations and ensuring professional, lawful and evidence-based policing in the region.

talent and engage in meaningful cultural dialogue. Speaking on the occasion, Vice Chairman of Ehsaas Foundation, Burhan Nazir, said that the initiative is dedicated to promoting youth, new faces, and emerging artists who often lack platforms to express themselves.

"Ehsaas-e-Sukhan is not just an event, it is a movement to support young artists and give them the confidence to express their thoughts through words. We strongly believe in the power of adab, language, and expression. Through this platform, we aim to promote new talent and preserve our rich literary and cultural heritage," he said.

The Foundation has invited poets, writers, story tellers, and lovers of literature to be a part of this journey and contribute to building a vibrant and inclusive literary community in Kashmir.

With Ehsaas-e-Sukhan, Ehsaas Foundation continues its commitment to empowering youth, promoting art and culture, and creating spaces where voices are heard, valued, and celebrated.

# Discussion on Motion of Thanks continues for second day

## ■ HT NEWS NETWORK

**JAMMU, FEBRUARY 04:** The discussion on Motion of Thanks on Lieutenant Governor's Address continued for the second day with Legislators raising issues and concerns of their respective constituencies besides Jammu and Kashmir's overall development.

Legislator Shamim Firdous raised the issue of students and youth imprisoned in Central jails of other states. She urged the government to take up the matter with the Union Government for their early release or transfer from outside jails to Srinagar Central Jail.

While participating in the debate, Sajjal Shaheen said that LGs address is the continuity of government's development vision of J&K which includes robust power system, regular water supply, better road infrastructure, improved health facilities, education and tourism.

Irfan Hafiz Lone, in his address raised the issue of Kashmiri students and workers being harassed in other parts of the country. He urged that government should take up the matter with the Union Government for their safety.

Surjit Singh Slatia, while participating in the debate, raised the issue of daily wagers. He drew attention towards increasing unemployment and closing of industrial units in J&K. He urged the government for revival of SIDCO and SICOP.

Balwant Singh Mankotia urged the government to conduct



Panchayat and Urban Local Bodies election. He also raised the issue of unscheduled power cuts creating inconvenience for the people in these harsh winter conditions.

Speaking in support of Motion of Thanks, Legislator Reyaaz Ahmad Khan said that the government has taken several initiatives for overall development of Jammu and Kashmir. He said that power, health, education and other sectors have witnessed significant improvement since the past 14 months. He added that the path of development and progress has begun since the Chief Minister Omar Abdullah took over the charge.

Muzaffar Iqbal Khan, while speaking during the debate, said that there has been tremendous improvement in the power and Jal Shakti and road connectivity sectors but there is need to do more in various areas of his Constituency.

He said an impactful change is being witnessed on the ground particularly in education, health and water supply facilities being provided to the people. He also spoke on restoration of statehood and safeguarding the land and employment rights of the people.

Legislator, Waheed ur Rehman Parra, during the debate spoke about various issues, particularly related to youth of J&K. He raised issues regarding reservation, merit, special assistance schemes and also demanded early resolution of reservation issue.

Legislator Dr. Narinder Singh Raina said that development of country depends on the development of States and UTs. He raised issues including electricity charge, encroachments and demanded opening of veterinary hospital and industrial estates in his Constituency.

Mubarak Gul, while speaking in favour of Motion of Thanks, highlighted various initiatives started by the government for overall development of Jammu and Kashmir.

In his address, Legislator Satish Kumar Sharma spoke about the issue of daily wagers, Asha Workers and others. He also spoke about the damage being caused to agriculture produce by the wild animals in his constituency and sought due compensation for the same.

Participating in the debate, Legislator Iftikar Ahmed appreciated the step of government, particularly Education Ministry, for regularising CPWs in J&K. He raised the issue of regularisation of daily wagers and casual labourers in the house. He also demanded recruitment policy for all newly established GMCS for plugging the gaps of staff deficiency.

Speaking in support of Motion, Legislator Qaysar Jamshaid Lone appreciated the Chief Minister and his Council of Ministers for initiating a new dawn of development since the past 15 months. He also appreciated the government and particularly Education Minister for change of academic session in schools. Prof. Gharu Ram Bhagat, while participating in the debate, raised various constituency specific issues of public importance.

Legislator, Abdul Majeed Larmi, while speaking in support of Motion highlighted various initiatives launched by the government for development of Jammu and Kashmir. He demanded compensation for the farmers whose fruit produce was affected by highway closure. He also demanded creation of a stop for Vande Bharat Train at Anantnag Railway Station.

Participating in the debate, Legislator Aga Syed Muntazir Mehdi raised the issue of political prisoners and other issues concerning his constituency.

Speaking during the debate, Legislator Darshan Kumar raised constituency specific issues, including upgradation of schools and shortage of staff in educational institutions.

Speaking in favour of Motion, Legislator Khurshid Ahmed commended the efficient performance of Chief Minister Omar Abdullah. He also lauded the government for restoration of Darbar Mow, increase in marriage assistance scheme as well as removal of educational bar in the scheme.

## DC Bandipora reviews developmental works during Visit to Gamroo

### ■ HT NEWS NETWORK

**BANDIPORA, FEBRUARY 04:** Deputy Commissioner (DC) Bandipora, Indu Kanwal Chib, on Wednesday visited Gamroo and adjoining areas to review the progress of various ongoing developmental works in the district.

During the visit, the DC inspected the under-construction DDC Office Complex at Gamroo and assessed the pace of work. She was informed that the project is nearing completion, with only sanitary and electrical works pending. The DC directed the concerned agencies to expedite the remaining works to ensure timely completion of the facility.



Later, the DC visited the 0.40 MGD Water Supply Scheme at Gamroo Vijhara and reviewed its functioning. Officials informed that the scheme is fully functional and is providing improved drinking water facilities to the local population. The DC stressed on proper maintenance and sustained service delivery.

Subsequently, the DC reviewed the progress of the Gujjar & Bakerwal (G&B) Girls Hostel at Gamroo, being executed by R&B Division Bandipora. She directed the executing agency to maintain quality standards and adhere to timelines to ensure early completion of the project.

The Deputy Commissioner was accompanied by ACD Bandipora, BDO Bandipora, AEE Jal Shakti Bandipora and other concerned officers during the tour.

## Power Shutdown by KPDCL

### ■ HT NEWS NETWORK

**SRINAGAR, FEBRUARY 04:** Chief Engineer, Distribution, KPDCL has informed that Shutdown of 33 KV Cheshmashahi-TRC Nedorus Line will be observed due to which power supply to Dal, Paras Hospital, 33 KV installations of Rajbagh Tapline and adjoining areas from 10 AM to 03 PM on 08 February, 2026.

Similarly, shutdown of 33 KV Bemina-JVC line will be observed due to which power supply to JVC Hospital, Children Hospital, State Motor Garage, Hajji House, Forensic Lab, PC Depot, Qamarwari, Barthana and adjoining areas will be affected from 10 AM to 01 PM on 07 February, 2026.

Likewise, shutdown of 33 KV Pampore-BK Pora line will be observed due to which power supply to BK Pora, Khanda, Checkpora, Chatergam, Kenihama, Summerbug, Wagoora, Aribagh, Checkpora and adjoining areas will be affected from 10 AM to 12 Noon on 05 February, 2026.

Furthermore, shutdown of 33 KV Badampora Wangipora Tapline and 33 KV Badampora Army Hakbara line will be observed due to which power supply to Batwina, Nowgam, Wangipora, Zazna, Ahan, Waskura, Kharbagh, Sumbal, Nesbal, Hajin, Preng, Madwan, Banyar, Hakbara, Chendergeer and adjoining areas will be affected from 10 AM to 03 PM on 09 & 14 February, 2026.

Likewise, 33 KV Badampora Lar Tulmulla line and 33 KV Badampora-Kurhama Dab line will be observed due to which power supply to Lar, Waliwar, Watlar, Repore, Tulmulla, Dangerpura, Watlar, Theeru, Larsun, Kurhama, Youngoora, Baroosa, Old Dab, Checki Baba, Salun, Sainik School, Rabitar, Kondbal, GCET, Safapora and adjoining areas will be affected from 10 AM to 03 PM on 07 & 12 February, 2026.

Similarly, shutdown of 33 KV Kangan Surfwat line and 33 KV Wangath Kangan line will be observed due to which power supply to Gund, Gadribal, Kullan, Gagangeer, Sonamarg, Fraw, Ganiwan, Baba Nagri, Wangath, Naranagh, Kachnambal and adjoining areas will be affected from 10 AM to 03 PM on 08 February, 2026. Likewise, shutdown of 33 KV Lassipora-Keegam line will be observed due to which power supply to Pakherpora, Hawal, Rajpora, Rahmoo, Keegam, Gulshanabad, Akhal, Chararipora and adjoining areas will be affected from 09 AM to 03 PM on 07 & 10 February, 2026.

Similarly, shutdown of 33 KV Pampore-SIDCO line will be observed due to which power supply to IE Khrew, Wuyan and Cement Plants and adjoining areas will be affected from 10 AM to 03 PM on 08 February, 2026. Likewise, shutdown of 33 KV Tapline of Tral 1st line from Nowdal will be observed due to which power supply to Tral Payeen, Devar, Pinglisch, Chewa, Kahlil, Tral Bala, Bajwani and adjoining areas will be affected from 10 AM to 03 PM on 05, 07 & 10 February, 2026.

Furthermore, shutdown of 33 KV Pattan-Amargarh line and 33 KV Arampora line will be observed due to which power supply to Pattan, Zangam, Old Zangam, New Buran, Hanjiwera, Nehalpora, Railway, Aadipora, Arampora and adjoining areas will be affected from 10 AM to 03 PM on 07 February, 2026.

## DC Budgam reviews Power Infrastructure works under RDSS with KPDCL

Emphasises timely completion, quality execution and improved Power Supply across District

### ■ HT NEWS NETWORK

**BUDGAM, FEBRUARY 04:** Deputy Commissioner (DC) Budgam Dr. Bilal Mohi-ud-Din Bhat, today chaired a comprehensive review meeting to assess the progress of power infrastructure strengthening works being executed by the Kashmir Power Distribution Corporation Limited (KPDCL) in the district under the Revamped Distribution Sector Scheme (RDSS) of the Government of India.

The meeting focused on physical progress achieved under key RDSS components aimed at modernising and augmenting the power distribution network to ensure reliable, efficient and quality power supply to consumers across Budgam.

The DC was apprised that under the Pole Erection component, against a total approved scope of 37,820 poles, a total of 22,863 poles

have been erected so far, significantly strengthening the distribution backbone.

With regard to 11 KV Line Installation, the total approved scope stands at 158 kilometres, out of which 43 kilometres have been completed.

The DC emphasised that completion of 11 KV lines is critical for load balancing, feeder segregation and reducing outages.

Regarding under LT Line (LTAB Cabling), the meeting was informed that against an approved scope of 1,571 kilometres, a length of 850.44 kilometres has been completed.

The DC directed for further acceleration of LT cabling to minimise line losses, improve safety and enhance service reliability.

Similarly, for Distribution Transformer (DTR) Installation, against a total target of 271 transformers, 92 DTRs have been installed so far.



The DC stressed that timely commissioning of DTRs is vital to reduce overloading, improve voltage profile and cater to growing demand in both urban and rural pockets.

The DC conducted a detailed review of field-level challenges including right-of-way issues, site

constraints, material availability and manpower deployment. He directed KPDCL department Budgam to strengthen coordination with the district administration, revenue and police departments to resolve bottlenecks and facilitate smooth execution of works. He instructed KPDCL to prepare a subdivision-wise and feeder-wise action plan for expediting the balance works.

The DC also stressed adherence to quality standards, safety norms and technical specifications under RDSS to ensure long-term sustainability of the infrastructure.

The DC reiterated that the Revamped Distribution Sector Scheme is a transformational initiative aimed at reducing AT&C losses, improving financial health of DISCOMs and delivering reliable and uninterrupted power supply to consumers.

He urged KPDCL to maintain momentum and complete the remaining scope within the stipulated timeframes for the larger public benefit.

Besides, Executive engineers of KPDCL, AEEs, and other district officers attended the meeting and presented sector-wise and component-wise progress reports.

## Ministry of MSME organises Mega Two Day Vendor Development Programme in Kashmir

### ■ HT NEWS NETWORK

**SRINAGAR, FEBRUARY 04:** Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME), through its field office Branch MSME Development & Facilitation Office (DFO), Srinagar, organised a first-of-its-kind Vendor Development Programme (VDP) involving 9 CPSEs in the Kashmir region, aimed at strengthening market linkages between Central Public Sector Undertakings (CPSUs) and local Micro & Small Enterprises (MSEs).

The programme saw the presence of senior officers from the Government of Jammu & Kashmir, including the Director Handicrafts & Handloom Kashmir, Massrat Ul Islam; Director KPDCL, Mehmood Ahmad Shah, and Director Industries & Commerce Kashmir, Khalid Majeed.

The programme was organised under the guidance of A.K. Tamaria, Joint Director/Head of Office MSME DFO Jammu and coordinated by Saheel Alaqlband, Assistant Director Branch MSME DFO Srinagar.

The two-day programme witnessed participation from nine leading CPSEs, including NHAI, NHPC, IOCL, FCI, BPCL, POWERGRID, HPCL, CPWD and NSIC. Senior officials from these CPSEs



participated to deliberate on the Public Procurement Policy of Government of India and its role in promoting and supporting MSEs.

Senior officials from GeM Headquarters, New Delhi, were also present and actively engaged with participating enterprises.

## DC Srinagar reviews progress of Solarization of Government Buildings in the District

### ■ HT NEWS NETWORK

**SRINAGAR FEBRUARY 04:-** To review the progress and latest status of solarization of Government buildings in the district, Deputy Commissioner (DC) Srinagar, Akshay Labroo today convened a meeting of concerned Engineers of JAKEDA and KPDCL here at the Conference Hall of DC Office Complex. At the outset, the Deputy Commissioner took a detailed stock of the solarization of Government buildings in the district by the concerned agencies aimed to reduce dependence on conventional power sources, promote clean energy generation and lower electricity expenditure of Government establishments. The DC was apprised of the latest status regarding the total number of Government buildings identified for installation of rooftop solar systems, material received, and installations completed at various sites. It was informed that 684 Government buildings have been identified for solarization, out of which 548 buildings have been covered so far, while the remaining buildings are scheduled to be covered by March 2026. On the occasion, the DC stressed the need to further expedite the solarization process and directed the concerned agencies to ensure completion of the remaining works within the stipulated timeline. The DC also directed the District Statistics and Evaluation Officer (DSEO) to complete the physical verification of solarized Government buildings by end of February 2026. The Meeting was attended by Chief Planning Officer, Fayaz Ahmad Dar, Engineers of KPDCL & JAKEDA and other concerned Officers.



# World Cancer Day observed at Budgam with Awareness & Medical Education Activities

DC stresses importance of awareness, screening and preventive Healthcare

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

**BUDGAM, FEBRUARY 04:** The World Cancer Day was today observed at the District Headquarters Budgam with a series of awareness and medical education activities aimed at promoting cancer prevention, early detection, and patient-centered care.

The programme was organised by the District Administration Budgam in collaboration with the Chief Medical Officer (CMO) Budgam and the Oncology Department of Paras Hospital Srinagar.

The event was chaired by Deputy Commissioner Budgam, Dr. Bilal Mohi-ud-Din Bhat.

Besides, CMO Budgam, DIO Budgam, NT Headquarters, the programme witnessed participation from senior district officers, health officials, doctors, paramedical staff, and other stakeholders.

Speaking on the occasion, The DC highlighted the growing burden of cancer and stressed the critical importance of awareness, timely screening, and early diagnosis in improving survival outcomes. He emphasised that community-level sensitisation, strengthening of primary healthcare systems, and ensuring timely referrals are essential to combat cancer



effectively.

The DC underscored the role of preventive healthcare, lifestyle modifications, and regular health check-ups in reducing cancer risk. He also drew attention to environmental factors contributing to rising health concerns and spoke about the hazardous effects of pollution,

particularly emissions from brick kilns, on public health.

The DC stated that prolonged exposure to polluted air and industrial emissions can aggravate respiratory ailments and increase the risk of serious diseases, including cancer. He stressed the need for strict monitoring of polluting units, adherence to

environmental norms, and collective efforts to reduce air pollution in order to safeguard public health.

The DC further called for greater inter-departmental coordination to address environmental health challenges in a comprehensive manner. He also reaffirmed the commitment of the District

Administration to support health initiatives, enhance coordination among departments, and ensure better access to specialised oncology services for the people of Budgam.

The DC called upon health professionals, frontline workers, and community stakeholders to work collectively towards creating a cancer-aware society and improving healthcare delivery at the grassroots level.

On the occasion, Specialist in Oncology, Dr. Shabnam Bashir from Paras Hospital Srinagar delivered a detailed guest lecture focusing on cancer awareness and management. She spoke extensively about common cancers, particularly breast cancer and colorectal cancer, highlighting early warning signs, screening protocols, and the importance of timely medical consultation.

Dr. Bashir also emphasized advances in cancer treatment and the need for patient-centric care to improve treatment outcomes and quality of life for cancer patients.

The participants lauded the efforts of the District Administration and appreciated the initiative aimed at strengthening cancer awareness and medical education in the district.

Govt initiates numerous steps to strengthen economic resilience of Industrial Units in JK: Deputy CM

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

**SRINAGAR FEB 4:** Deputy Chief Minister Surinder Chaudhary today said that the government has undertaken numerous initiatives to improve cash flow, address financial stress and strengthen economic resilience of industrial units, MSMEs, artisans, weavers and farmers of Jammu and Kashmir.

The Deputy Chief Minister was replying to a question raised by Legislator Waheed ur Rehman Parra in the House.

He added that the government has launched the JKMSME Health Clinic as an institutional mechanism to identify early signs of industrial stress using analytics and facilitating systematic assessment and customized remedial measures for revival.



He said that access to finance has been further strengthened under the Raising and Accelerating MSME Performance (RAMP) programme through enhanced linkage with the Credit Guarantee Fund Trust for Micro and Small Enterprises (CGTMSE).

The Deputy Chief Minister said that the J&K Industrial Policy 2021-30 continues to provide multiple incentives, including turnover and SGST incentives, green initiatives, 100% subsidy on diesel generator sets, exemptions from stamp duty and court fee besides subsidies for quality certification, automation and pollution control. He said that the revival and rehabilitation of sick MSMEs are being guided by the RBI's Framework for Revival and Rehabilitation of MSMEs, enabling restructuring of liabilities and need-based financial assistance. Regarding the welfare of artisans and weavers, the Deputy Chief Minister said that several targeted schemes are being implemented on this account. These included the Credit Card Scheme for Artisans and Weavers, offering credit up to Rs. 2 lakh with 7% interest subvention; financial support to cooperatives and SHGs; Karkhanadar Scheme for skill upgradation; Weavers MUDRA Scheme and the Education Scheme for Children of Artisans and Weavers.

He said that GI-certified unit holders are also being provided rent-free stalls and full support for participation in exhibitions. Additionally, master craftsmen facing indigent circumstances receive monthly assistance under the Direct Benefit Scheme.

The Deputy Chief Minister said that the Agriculture Production Department is extending robust financial relief to the farmers through interest subvention on crop loans under the Modified Interest Subvention Scheme, credit restructuring in case of natural calamities and comprehensive crop insurance under the Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY). Further, he said that the Agriculture Infrastructure Fund (AIF) and Animal Husbandry Infrastructure Development Fund (AHIDF) are promoting long-term investment in agriculture and livestock infrastructure through interest subvention and credit guarantees.

Govt prioritizes resource utilisation, enrolment boost aiming for academic excellence: Sakeena Itoo

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

**SRINAGAR FEB 4:** Minister for Education Sakeena Itoo today said that the government is presently prioritizing enhancement of overall enrolment, strengthening of academic offerings and improving utilization of existing institutional resources for the benefit of students in Government Degree Colleges across Jammu and Kashmir.

The Minister said this while replying to a question of Legislator Nizam-ud-Din Bhat regarding H.K Government Degree College (GDC) Bandipora in the House.



The Education Minister informed the House that at present Science-cum-Administrative Block equipped with laboratories, 12 Room Lecture Hall Block and three Pre-fabricated Huts are being utilised for academic activities at HKGDC Bandipora. She added that various projects like Girls Hostel, Medication and Yoga Centre, Skill Centre and three Pre-fabricated Huts are under execution, while tendering process for playground is also underway.

The Minister also informed the house that the government is prioritizing enhancement of overall enrolment in colleges across Jammu and Kashmir. As such, establishment of a separate Degree College for Women in district Bandipora may not be viable at this stage, as the same shall further fragment the enrolment in the existing college, she added.

## Bandipora gears up for Wular Bird Watch Festival

DC reviews festival arrangements



and Nadihal, and stalls at S.K. Payneen and Watlab.

The DC directed the constitution of a Rate Fixation Committee to finalize rates for eco-guides, shikara rides and fisheries-related services. She also reviewed transport arrangements to ensure smooth movement during the festival. On the occasion, the DC stressed the importance of promoting sustainable tourism around Wular Lake by highlighting its rich biodiversity and the seasonal arrival of migratory birds.

Five prominent locations have been identified for festival activities, with reception centres and camps at Banyari

and environmental awareness but also serve as a platform for generating sustainable and diversified livelihood opportunities for local communities.

The meeting was attended by Assistant Commissioner Development Bandipora, Coordinator WUCMA, District Information Officer Bandipora, Deputy Chief Education Officer Bandipora, Assistant Regional Transport Officer Bandipora, Chief Executive Officer Municipal Council Bandipora, Tehsildar Bandipora, District Programme Manager RLM Bandipora and other concerned officers.

Rs 71.183 lakh released for upgradation of sports infra in Chanpora constituency: Satish Sharma

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

**SRINAGAR FEB 4:** For development and maintenance of playfields and sports infrastructure, Rs 71.183 lakh have been released for Chanapora Constituency during the year 2025-26.

This information was given by Minister for Youth Services and Sports Satish Sharma in the House while replying to a question raised by Legislator Mushtaq Guru.

The Minister further informed the

House that volleyball court with fencing/drain has been taken up at Nowgam with allotted cost of Rs. 20 lakh, of which, Rs. 11,459 lakh stand utilized. He added that for Chainlink Fencing of the existing Synthetic Volleyball Court and ZPEO office along with main gate at Nowgam Playfield, Rs 13.64 lakh have been allotted, of which, Rs. 12.36 lakh have been utilized. The remaining allocation of the funds is for construction of ZPEO office at Nowgam Srinagar" the Minister said.

Permanent restoration of Larnoo Bridge being done at Rs 2 cr: Deputy Chief Minister

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

**SRINAGAR FEB 4:** Deputy Chief Minister, Surinder Choudhary today said that the works worth Rs. 2 crore are being carried out by the R&B department for permanent restoration of Larnoo Bridge in Kokernag constituency of Anantnag district.

The Deputy Chief Minister was replying to a question raised by Legislator Zafar Ali Khatana in the House.

He added that the Larnoo Bridge, located

on the T03 Dessu Lehenwan Marg, was previously built by the R&B department.

He said that the Bridge Abutment wing and approach walls got partially damaged during the floods in the months of August and September 2025 and permanent restoration is being carried out at an estimated cost of Rs. 200 Lakh.

He further informed that the road from Bidhard to Khirby is a single lane BT road, in good condition, with a carriage width of 3.65 meter.

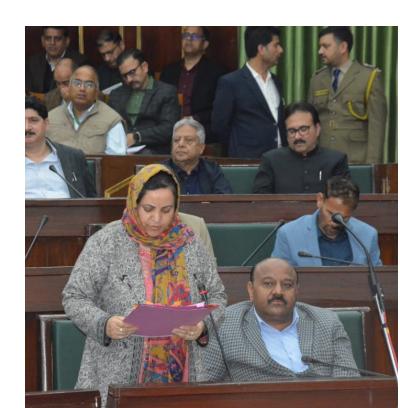
Regular market inspections, rice sampling being conducted across J&K to check adulteration: Sakeena Itoo

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

**SRINAGAR FEB 4:** Minister for Health and Medical Education Sakeena Itoo today informed the House that regular market inspections and sampling of rice is being conducted by the Health department across Jammu and Kashmir, including Srinagar, to check sale of adulterated rice.

This was stated by the Minister while replying to a question raised by Legislator Shamim Firdous regarding 'Adulterated Rice' in the House.

The Minister said that during the financial year 2025-26, 121 rice samples had been lifted and sent to NABL accredited food testing



laboratories for analysis. Of which, 110 test reports have been received, so far. She informed that seven samples

were reported as 'Not of Standard Quality (NSQ)' and cases have been filed in the competent courts in terms of provisions of the Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006.

The Minister said that the department is conducting regular market inspections and sampling of rice under the provisions of Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006 in the entire Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir, including Srinagar. She also informed the House that out of 7 NSQ samples, 3 have been found with Folic Acid content less than prescribed standards under FSSA, while 4 have been found with Chalky kernels exceeding the prescribed limits under FSSA.

No enquiry ordered in 4th Tawi Bridge construction:

Deputy Chief Minister



as per the inputs furnished by the Managing Director, JKPC, the 4th Tawi Bridge project was awarded to JKPC in 2010, with an estimated cost of 93.12 crore. The project was awarded and JKPC floated an e-tender, which got matured. The Deputy CM added that consequent upon the decision of

the Contract Committee and subsequent approval of Chairman JKPC Limited, the allotment was made to the lowest bidder, M/S S.P. Shingla Construction Private Limited, for an amount of Rs 67,088 crore on turnkey basis. He further informed that the said contractor took up the work and completed the bridge in time, which was inaugurated by the then Chief Minister in the year 2013 and thrown open for public traffic.

The Deputy CM added that after commissioning of the said bridge and during the heavy floods which occurred in 2014, the bridge components remained intact and no part of the bridge was damaged.

**HT EDITORIAL**

**Well-begun is half done**

The process for commencing the water transport in Srinagar and other districts of the Kashmir valley has started with Divisional Commissioner Kashmir, Anshul Garg convening a meeting of the concerned stakeholders some days back. The meeting was attended by Secretary Transport, Avny Lavasa and other officers along with the coordinator of Inland Waterways Authority of India (IWAI). The meeting was held to review the removal of bottlenecks for water transport of the envisaged project of river Jhelum.

At the outset the IWAI Coordinator gave a detailed presentation on the bottlenecks of the project and highlighted the required interventions. The Divisional Commissioner directed IWAI to take possession of land at two identified locations and to conduct a joint inspection to identify land for the third location. It was informed that out of eight proposed locations, four have already been taken over by IWAI. In other words, it can be said that a good beginning has been made and this has to be followed by more practical steps.

Since directions have been issued to the IWAI to take possession of land at two identified locations it is important that the authority does the same at the earliest. This would mean that consequent steps to start the eco-friendly mode of transport would be taken and the air of Srinagar would have less impact of environment pollution. The air quality index of Srinagar and other districts of Kashmir has been badly hit and the same needs to be restored to its normal level.

Issues related to high tension (HT) and low tension (LT) power lines came up for discussion during the meeting with the Divisional Commissioner instructing IWAI to share a detailed list of site-specific issues with Chief Engineer, KPDCL, for preparation of removal estimates. At the same time the PWD was directed to assess removal of cofferdams under bridges and to facilitate necessary clearances. RTO Kashmir was appointed as the nodal officer to ensure close coordination and effective communication among all concerned departments.

It is imperative that the bottlenecks that have been identified are removed so that the operation of water transport becomes a reality and that too in near future. At the same time, it is important that a time-line is set in this regard and the project should be started by that time. No delays should be accepted in this regard and clear-cut directions need to be issued to the concerned officers or officials.

# PRAGATI@50: Why Delivery, Not Intent, Defines Governance



■ **T.K. RAMACHANDRAN**

Two path-breaking interventions by the Government have had a great impact on planning, execution and monitoring of large projects - PM Gati Shakti and PRAGATI. We look at the latter in this piece.

The 50th high-level review under the PRAGATI (Pro-Active Governance and Timely Implementation) framework marks a fundamental shift in how the Indian State approaches governance, moving from intent to delivery, procedural compliance to outcomes, and fragmented authority to coordinated, timely execution. PRAGATI is thus not merely an administrative innovation; it represents a deliberate re-engineering of governance architecture. How did this model of governance deliver results when others have failed?

**The Need for PRAGATI**

Delays in public projects have become almost axiomatic. Yet they rarely stem from a lack of policy clarity or financial sanction. They arise because governance systems are fragmented. Ministries function vertically; States and the Centre act sequentially; and disputes circulate without a forum empowered to impose resolution. Accountability diffuses even as activity multiplies. The core problem is weak coordination and silo-based review mechanisms.

As a result, the broader objective of project delivery is often lost. Many projects remained stalled for years due to land issues, environmental or forest clearances, regulatory approvals, contractual disputes, or inter-State coordination challenges. In a multi-ministry and multi-State political economy where each entity lords over the domain it controls, it is difficult for anyone to convince the other.

When several States and Ministries have to contribute to project completion, the old approach of having meetings, discussions, field visits, constituting committees, and endless correspondence is ineffective. This was an approach in which discussion was mistaken for decision, activity for

work, movement for progress and mere intent for achievement.

**Enter PRAGATI**

PRAGATI addresses these persistent structural failures by redesigning how decisions are taken, synchronised, and enforced. Functioning as a system integrator, it brings decision-makers across Ministries, States, and districts onto a single institutional and digital platform. It collapses delays caused by file movement, jurisdictional ambiguity, and inter-departmental correspondence. Most importantly, it restores a bird's-eye view of execution, allowing leadership to identify where the system is constrained rather than where a file is pending.

The Hon'ble Prime Minister's role in chairing PRAGATI reviews is central to its effectiveness. His direct engagement sends an unambiguous signal that delivery is a national priority and that execution failures will receive attention at the highest level. It facilitates decisive action and transforms review into a binding framework for results. Decisions taken during these reviews are final, time-bound, and digitally recorded, ensuring accountability is clear and enforceable.

Technology acts as a critical enabler. Real-time data, geo-spatial visualisation, and live interaction with field authorities eliminate information asymmetry between stakeholders and ensure that decision-making is grounded in evidence. Importantly, technology strengthens administrative judgment rather than replacing it, reinforcing leadership responsibility within the system.

What distinguishes PRAGATI from earlier review mechanisms is its insistence on closure. Issues remain live until resolved and are continuously tracked by the Cabinet Secretariat and the Prime Minister's Office. Explanations no longer substitute outcomes. Over time, this discipline has reshaped administrative behaviour, encouraging Ministries and States to anticipate and resolve problems before escalation becomes necessary.

**The Results**

The outcomes are clearly visible and measurable. Projects worth over ₹85 lakh crore have seen accelerated progress. In recent years, ten projects of the Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways (MoPSW) were reviewed under PRAGATI, enabling early resolution of bottlenecks and faster execution. I will use two projects as examples.

The National Maritime Heritage Complex at Lothal is a massive project involving many Min-

istries at the Centre like Culture, Defence, External Affairs, Railways and Highways as well as the Government of Gujarat. Also, since several coastal State pavilions are to be set up, the concerned States are also part of the project. Bringing the NMHC project onto the PRAGATI agenda last year immediately spurred action at multiple levels. Usually, the agenda is notified a few months before it is taken up for review by the Hon'ble Prime Minister, providing an opportunity for different stakeholders to address issues with a sense of urgency. The result is that most issues that can be sorted at an official/ministerial level are already sorted out and only intractable residual items requiring guidance or direction are taken up during the actual review.

Similarly, the Jal Marg Vikas project, which is being implemented on NW-1 that passes through Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand, and West Bengal was reviewed under PRAGATI twice. This project is now at completion stage with most pending issues resolved.

PRAGATI underscores a critical truth: public value is created not merely by announcing schemes, but by ensuring that sanctioned investments translate into outcomes. Stalled projects have progressed not because policies were rewritten, but because execution pathways were simplified and accountability enforced. Equally significant is PRAGATI's contribution to cooperative federalism. By placing Chief Secretaries and Union Secretaries on a single real-time platform, it replaces fragmented responsibility with shared ownership of results.

PRAGATI@50 stands as evidence that governance outcomes are a function of institutional design. Dismantling silos, restoring a bird's-eye view of execution, and prioritising closure, PRAGATI demonstrates that effective governance is not just about doing more, but also about doing what is already sanctioned, faster, better, and together. Timely execution accelerates access to services, boosts the economy, reduces regional disparities, and strengthens public confidence in the State's capacity to govern.

PRAGATI is both a record of leadership-driven delivery and a blueprint for governing complexity. The Global attention and applause that it is receiving are proof of this.

**The author is Ex Secretary, Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways**

## Chenab Valley's Silent Struggle: Votes Won But Voices Ignored



■ **MOOL RAJ**

Despite decades of political promises, the districts of Doda, Kishtwar, and Ramban continue to grapple with underdevelopment and marginalisation – reigniting demands for separate divisional status.

The Chenab Valley, comprising of a cluster of districts, has long raised its demand for recognition. These districts include Kishtwar, Doda, and Ramban which have their own distinct traditions, customs, languages, and culture. These three districts are part of the Jammu division, one of the two existing divisions of the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir.

Culturally and in terms of perspective, the Chenab Valley aligns more closely with the Kashmir division, though there are slight variations in tradition and dialect. For instance, most Kashmiri weddings feature the elaborate Wazwan feast and conversations in pure Kashmiri. In contrast, people of the Chenab Valley serve a less extensive Wazwan and speak Kashmiri interspersed with Urdu and local dialects.

These slight differences, however, do not justify the marginalisation the region faces. Beneath this marginalisation is buried a narrative of resistance that occasionally resurfaces through voices calling for rightful recognition and development.

The issue has often been exploited for political capital, with various regional political parties promising separate status for the Chenab Valley during pre-election campaigns (the recent elections of 2024 being an exception) in an attempt to boost their vote bank.

Yet, these promises have largely remained unfulfilled.

Various efforts have been made in the past to address the backwardness of the marginalised districts of the former state of Jammu and Kashmir. According to the Regional Autonomy Report of 1999, which aimed to promote rapid social development and self-governance, the term 'Chenab Valley' was used to describe the erstwhile Doda district and Tehsil Mahore (Reasi). Later, in 2007, the Doda district was split into three separate districts: Doda, Ramban, and Kishtwar. This historical reference clearly signifies that the demand for recognition has been long-standing and is supported by valid justification.

Despite repeated promises by regional leaders actively involved in politics, the aspiration for divisional status for the Chenab Valley remains unfulfilled.

New Secret of the Himalayas Unravelled: Bhal Padri a Stunning Meadow in the Lap of Chenab Valley

Over the years, the people and social workers of Doda have staged multiple protests, and journalists have covered stories highlighting the demand for divisional status for the Chenab Valley. Yet, promises continued to be delayed and sidelined, resulting in nothing. It began in 1999, when the Regional Autonomous Committee submitted a report, and again in 2014, when the then-ruling coalition government of Jammu and Kashmir revisited the issue.

In July 2015, the then Chief Minister of Jammu and Kashmir, Mufti Mohammad Sayeed, announced a financial initiative called the Chenab Valley Development Fund (CVDF). Crores of rupees were allocated under this scheme for the upliftment of the districts of Kishtwar, Doda, and Ramban, with planned investments in infrastructure, educational institution upgrades, tourism development, and other projects.

The resources for the Chenab Valley Development Fund would be mobilised by various means, with 2% to be chipped

in by the hydroelectric companies operating in the region. Besides, there will be the contribution of the State Government as well." Mufti Mohammad Sayeed, while speaking at the District Development Board meetings of Doda and Kishtwar.

However, the pseudo-financial boom promised under the CVDF initiative soon faded into dormancy, neglected and forgotten over time. This followed the fate of another preceding development two decades before this.

In 1996, the then Chief Minister Dr Farooq Abdullah proposed regional autonomy through the formation of a Hill Development Council. Following this, in 2000, a private members bill was presented in the Legislative Assembly by then-MLA from Bhaderwah, Sheikh Abdul Rahman, advocating for the establishment of a Hill Development Council. This bill clearly reflected the demand for self-governance and recognition of the Chenab Valley's unique identity and needs but did not receive the support on the floor of the house.

One major reason behind the failure to implement such initiatives is the lack of committed political leadership, independent of vote-bank politics.

Due to its cultural similarities with Kashmir, the Chenab Valley is often misrepresented, strengthening the case for its divisional status. Carving out a separate division for the Chenab Valley is not only a matter of development and governance but also a step toward preserving cultural identity, social harmony, and political clarity.

As Anzer Ayoob, a journalist from the Chenab region says, "A separate division would be a game-changer." He explains, "Right now, we're under the Jammu division, and the Divisional Commissioner, based far away, can't possibly understand our needs of unpaved roads in Kishtwar, the risks our people face with hydroelectric projects, the lack of schools and healthcare."

A separate division would enable faster decision-making and develop-

ment projects tailored to the region's unique challenges. The economic and administrative empowerment would also hold representatives accountable, shifting their focus from photo-ops to tangible progress. It will also unify the Chenab region's diverse identities.

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) denies the existence of the Chenab Valley as a separate entity, whereas regional parties like the Jammu and Kashmir National Conference (JKNC) advocate for separate divisional status, along with the Pir Panjal region of the Jammu division.

For better understanding, we must examine the link between this long-pending demand and the regional government. In 2015, during the coalition government of the BJP and PDP, decisions aimed at regional upliftment included the allocation of the Chenab Valley Development Fund and upgrading of infrastructure. In 2019, when Ladakh was bifurcated from J&K, the Chief of the People's Democratic Party, Mehbooba Mufti, stated that the Chenab Valley should have been granted divisional status, given its underdevelopment and dense population.

The changing political regimes have clearly reflected the varying pace of development across these districts. However, most governments have merely passed the responsibility from one administration to another. Notably, in the recent elections, there was no mention of this issue in the manifestos of any major political party. In 2019, former Chief Minister Omar Abdullah promised divisional status for the Chenab Valley if voted to power. However, when he contested the 2024 elections, this promise was absent from his campaign. Nevertheless, the current government can still take concrete steps, as doing so would enhance administrative efficiency and governance in the region, especially in the districts of Kishtwar, Doda, and Ramban, which currently fall under the Jammu division.

**The Author Is A Regular Columnist And Freelance Writer**

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# Centenary of Virginia Woolf's On Being Ill



■ DR. RATAN BHATTACHARJEE

In 'On Being Ill', Virginia Woolf wrote, "Considering how common illness is, how tremendous the spiritual change that it brings, how astonishing, when the lights of health go down, the undiscovered countries that are then disclosed..." Virginia Woolf's essay 'On Being Ill', first published in January 1926, turns 100 this year, and its reflections on sickness, solitude, and language remain startlingly relevant. Written from her sickbed, Woolf argued that illness deserved a place in literature equal to love, war, and jealousy, yet lamented the poverty of language when it came to describing pain. A century later, her insights continue to shape how we think about vulnerability, embodiment, and the human condition. At 100, 'On Being Ill' resonates in ways Woolf could not have foreseen. Virginia Woolf's 'On Being Ill' was composed in the aftermath of a fainting spell at her nephew Quentin's birthday dinner, and published in T.S. Eliot's *The Criterion*. Later reprinted as *Illness: An Unexploited Mine* and eventually issued by her own Hogarth Press, the essay insists that sickness is not merely a private affliction but a profound human experience worthy of literary exploration.

Love, war, jealousy, ambition—these had been celebrated endlessly in novels and poems. But illness, she argued, was treated as a mere interruption, a silence, a gap in the narrative. Now, a century later, her essay turns 100, and its insights remain startlingly fresh. In an age shaped by pandemics, medical advances, and renewed attention to mental health, Woolf's meditation on sickness and language feels prophetic, reminding us that illness is not an aberration but a fundamental aspect of human life. Woolf begins with a provocation: why has illness not been given its rightful place in literature. She notes that while writers have lavished attention on the passions of the heart and the dramas of society, they have neglected the body's frailty. Pain, she observes, resists language. "English, which can express the

thoughts of Hamlet and the tragedy of Lear, has no words for the shiver and the headache." This lament is not merely stylistic; it is philosophical. Woolf suggests that illness exposes the limits of language itself, forcing us to confront the inadequacy of words when faced with bodily suffering. Yet she also insists that illness opens new dimensions of consciousness, altering perception, intensifying awareness, and reshaping our relationship with the world. Culturally, Woolf's essay challenges the romanticization of health as the default human state. By foregrounding illness, she destabilizes the assumption that literature must celebrate vitality. Instead, she argues for the dignity of weakness, the creativity of convalescence, and the insights born of suffering. In doing so, she expands the scope of literature itself, making room for experiences often silenced or marginalized.

The centenary of 'On Being Ill' invites us to reconsider Woolf not only as a modernist novelist but also as a philosopher of vulnerability. Her reflections remind us that illness is not an aberration but a fundamental aspect of human life, shaping perception, language, and community. To read Woolf today is to recognize that the sickbed, far from being a place of silence, can be a site of profound literary and existential revelation. Woolf observed that while literature abounds in depictions of love and battle, it rarely pauses to dwell on the realities of illness. She called illness "the great confessional," a state that strips away pretenses and reveals the rawness of human existence. Her prose captures the paradox of illness: its isolating silence and its heightened sensitivity to the world. Woolf describes how lying in bed alters perception, making the sky, the sound of rain, or the sight of flowers more vivid. Illness, she suggests, can open new dimensions of consciousness, even as it confines the body. Yet she also critiques the inadequacy of language to convey pain, noting that words falter when faced with the physicality of suffering. This tension—between the richness of inner experience and the poverty of expression—remains central to modern discussions of health and literature.

Her essay is deeply personal. Woolf had long struggled with bouts of mental illness, migraines, and physical weakness. Writing from her sickbed, she describes how lying in bed changes one's perspective: the sky becomes more vivid, the sound of rain more resonant, the sight of flowers more

poignant. Illness, she argues, strips away social pretenses and reveals the rawness of existence. It is "the great confessional," a state in which the soul is laid bare. In this sense, illness is not merely a physical condition but a spiritual and aesthetic experience, one that deserves literary exploration. The essay also reflects Woolf's modernist sensibility. Like her novels, 'On Being Ill' is experimental, weaving together observation, philosophy, and poetic imagery. She moves fluidly from the sickroom to the cosmos, from the body's weakness to the grandeur of literature. She critiques the absence of illness in canonical works, noting that even when writers depict sickness, they do so superficially, as a plot device rather than a lived reality. Woolf's insistence on illness as a legitimate subject anticipates later developments in literature and theory, from the rise of illness memoirs to the medical humanities.

The cultural significance of Woolf's essay lies in its challenge to the romanticization of health. By foregrounding illness, she destabilizes the assumption that literature must celebrate vitality. Instead, she argues for the dignity of weakness, the creativity of convalescence, and the insights born of suffering. In doing so, she expands the scope of literature itself, making room for experiences often silenced or marginalized. This expansion is not only aesthetic but ethical. Woolf insists that illness is part of the human condition, and to ignore it is to ignore a fundamental aspect of life. On Truth and Honesty Woolf wrote in this essay, "There is, let us confess it (and illness is the great confessional) a childish outspokiness in illness; things are said, truths blurted out, which the cautious respectability of health conceals." Her essay also anticipates contemporary debates about embodiment and patient narratives.

In recent decades, scholars and writers have emphasized the importance of listening to patients' stories, of recognizing that illness is not only a medical condition but a lived experience. Woolf's reflections align with this perspective, highlighting the subjective dimensions of sickness—the altered perceptions, the heightened sensitivities, the struggle for language. She reminds us that illness is not reducible to symptoms or diagnoses; it is a complex interplay of body, mind, and world. Moreover, 'On Being Ill' challenges the boundaries between literature and medicine. Woolf suggests that writers have neglected illness because it resists narrative conventions.

Pain is inarticulate, repetitive, and isolating. Yet she also shows that illness can inspire new forms of writing, new ways of capturing experience. Her essay itself is an experiment in this direction, blending lyricism with reflection, fragment with continuity. In this sense, Woolf's work anticipates the medical humanities, a field that seeks to integrate literature, philosophy, and art into the study of health and illness.

The centenary of 'On Being Ill' invites us to reconsider Woolf not only as a novelist but also as a philosopher of vulnerability. Her reflections remind us that illness is not an interruption of life but part of its rhythm. They challenge us to rethink our assumptions about health, language, and literature. They also invite us to embrace the insights of weakness, to recognize that the sickbed can be a site of creativity and revelation. Woolf's essay is also a meditation on solitude. Illness isolates, confining the body to bed, separating the individual from social life. Yet Woolf suggests that this solitude can be fertile, opening new perspectives and intensifying awareness. She describes how illness alters perception, making ordinary sights and sounds extraordinary. The sky, the rain, the flowers—all become more vivid, more meaningful. In this sense, illness is not only a deprivation but also a gift, a chance to see the world anew. At the same time, Woolf acknowledges the loneliness of illness. She notes the absence of adequate language, the difficulty of communicating pain, the silence that surrounds the sick. This tension—between heightened perception and inarticulate suffering—remains central to the experience of illness. It is also central to Woolf's essay, which oscillates between celebration and lament, between the richness of consciousness and the poverty of expression.

The relevance of 'On Being Ill' today is undeniable. In a world increasingly attentive to mental health, disability, and chronic illness, 'On Language and Pain': Virginia Woolf says, "English, which can express the thoughts of Hamlet and the tragedy of Lear, has no words for the shiver and the headache." Woolf's reflections offer a framework for understanding vulnerability. They remind us that illness is not only a medical issue but a cultural and existential one. They also remind us that literature has a role to play in articulating experiences that medicine cannot fully capture. Woolf's essay, written a century ago, con-

tinues to inspire writers, scholars, and patients alike. In celebrating the centenary of 'On Being Ill', we also celebrate Woolf's courage. To write about illness in 1926 was to challenge literary conventions, to insist on the legitimacy of a subject often ignored. Woolf's essay is not only a meditation on sickness but also a manifesto for literature, a call to expand its scope and embrace its silences. It is a reminder that literature must reflect the full range of human experience, including its frailties and vulnerabilities. Ultimately, 'On Being Ill' is a testament to Woolf's vision. She saw illness not as a mere interruption but as a profound human experience, worthy of reflection and expression. She recognized the inadequacy of language but also its potential, its capacity to capture even the most elusive aspects of life. She embraced vulnerability as a source of insight, solitude as a source of creativity, and weakness as a source of dignity.

A hundred years later, her essay continues to speak to us, reminding us that illness is part of the human story, that literature must embrace it, and that vulnerability is not a defect but a dimension of existence. In reading Woolf today, we recognize that the sickbed, far from being a place of silence, can be a site of revelation. We recognize that illness, far from being an interruption, can be a source of meaning. And we recognize that literature, far from being confined to love and war, must also embrace the frailty of the body and the resilience of the soul. Virginia Woolf's 'On Being Ill' at 100 is not only a literary milestone but also a cultural one. It challenges us to rethink our assumptions, to expand our narratives, and to embrace our vulnerabilities. It reminds us that illness is not an aberration but a fundamental aspect of life, shaping perception, language, and community. And it invites us to see literature not only as a mirror of vitality but also as a mirror of frailty, a reflection of the full spectrum of human experience. Virginia Woolf is right when she says in 'On Being Ill' "[Illness] awakens us to the world about us, whose smallest details... suddenly throb with aliveness and magnetic curiosity."

International Tagore Awardee Multi-lingual poet Dr. Ratan Bhattacharjee is a former Affiliate Faculty Virginia Commonwealth University & Retd. Associate Professor and Head Post Graduate Dept of English Dum Dum Motijheel College Email profratanbhattacharjee@gmail.com

## A landmark initiative



■ M S NAZKI

Ujale apni yadon ke hamare saath rahne do, na jaane kis gali mein zindagi ki shaam ho jae!

Dushmani jam kar karo lekin ye gunja, ish rahe, jab kabhi ham dost ho jaa. eñ to sharminda na hoñ!

Fortifying India's Resilience - From Reactive to Proactive was the story at hand and this is how we treated the same!

Disaster management in India has undergone a significant paradigm shift over the past two decades. The traditional emphasis on search, rescue, and post-disaster relief has gradually evolved into a more holistic framework that prioritises preparedness, mitigation, and resilience.

This transition has been driven by the increasing frequency and intensity of natural disasters, which not only result in loss of life but also cause extensive damage to infrastructure, livelihoods, and economic stability. The financial implications of rebuilding damaged infrastructure and restoring public services have underscored the limitations of conventional disaster relief mechanisms.

Infrastructure, in theory, can be designed and constructed in accordance with modern safety standards, building codes, and disaster-resilient norms. However, in practice, enforcement remains weak due to multiple challenges. These include shortages of adequately trained technical manpower, inconsistent implementation of regulations, vested interests of various stakeholders such as builders, contractors, and developers, and limited public aware-

ness of long-term resilience benefits. Consequently, the overall picture of disaster-resilient infrastructure development, especially in rural and rapidly urbanising areas, remains less than satisfactory.

To address these systemic gaps, there is a growing recognition of the need to strengthen capacity building and training for engineers, masons, architects, and officials at all levels of governance. Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) must be empowered with adequate manpower, technical expertise, and financial resources to enforce compliance, adopt localised solutions, and deploy emerging technologies for resilient construction.

At the same time, fiscal incentives and sustainable long-term interventions are required to encourage disaster-resilient practices.

A critical pillar of this evolving framework is Disaster Risk Financing (DRF). DRF ensures that financial resources are available when disasters strike, enabling faster response and recovery while minimising economic losses. Importantly, DRF is not merely about the availability of funds but about deploying the right financial instruments at the right time. Its core principles include timely access to funds, risk layering through a mix of internal and external financial tools, efficient disbursement mechanisms, and data-driven decision-making using predictive modelling and analytics.

Traditionally, India's disaster financing relied heavily on post-disaster (ex-post) mechanisms such as the State and National Disaster Response Funds (SDRF and NDRF). While these have played a crucial role in relief distribution, they often fall short of addressing long-term recovery and resilience needs. Recognising this gap, India has increasingly moved towards pre-arranged (ex-ante) risk financing mechanisms.

A landmark initiative in this direction is the Disaster Risk Transfer Parametric Insurance Solution (DRTPS), launched by the National Disaster Management Authority

(NDMA) in August 2021. Unlike traditional indemnity insurance, DRTPS is a parametric insurance model that provides immediate payouts based on pre-defined triggers such as rainfall intensity, earthquake magnitude, or extreme temperature thresholds. This ensures rapid liquidity to states, enabling quicker recovery and reducing the fiscal burden on governments and communities.

The financial architecture of DRTPS involves collaboration between public institutions and global partners, including SBI General Insurance, international reinsurers, and institutions supported by global development finance. Pilot implementations, such as in Nagaland, have demonstrated its potential to bridge critical gaps in disaster risk financing by ensuring swift, predictable, and transparent payouts.

In conclusion, India's journey in disaster management reflects a clear shift from reactive relief to proactive resilience. Strengthening disaster risk financing through innovative instruments like parametric insurance, coupled with improved governance, capacity building, and enforcement of resilient construction norms, is essential for safeguarding lives, infrastructure, and economic stability in an increasingly disaster-prone future.

Western Command Disaster Management Conclave, in association with NDMA, concluded at Chandimandir Military Station, bringing together senior military leadership, State Secretaries from Punjab, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh & J&K, civil administration officials, and NDMA, SDMA, NDRF & SDRF officers.

Lt Gen Manoj Kumar Katiyar, PVSM, UYSM, AVSM, Army Commander, Western Command, underscored the Indian Army's decisive role as a force multiplier in support of civil authorities during large-scale disasters, while Lt Gen Syed Ata Hasnain (Retd), PVSM, UYSM, AVSM, SM, VSM, Member NDMA, set the strategic context for integrated national preparedness. The Keynote

Address by Shri Rajendra Singh, Member & HoD, NDMA, articulated a technology-driven, whole-of-nation disaster response framework. The conclave concluded with a Closing Address by Ms Rita Missal, Member NDMA, reinforcing the imperative of sustained inter-agency coordination and preparedness.

Deliberations focused on seamless civil-military coordination, Golden Hour optimisation and tech-enabled response, reinforcing India's disaster resilience when crises exceed civil capacity.

What is reactive policy:

A reactive policy is a course of action developed in response to existing problems, crises, or specific events after they have occurred. Unlike proactive approaches that prevent issues, reactive policies focus on immediate, often ad hoc, solutions for damage control and remediation.

Key aspects of reactive policy include:

Triggered by Events: It is implemented only after a problem has materialized.

Crisis Management: Frequently used in situations requiring urgent, immediate action. Limitations: It may fail to address the underlying causes of issues and can sometimes worsen inequalities.

Examples: Implementing new security measures immediately following a data breach, or enacting environmental regulations only after a major disaster.

Reactive policy is often considered a "necessity-based" approach, as opposed to proactive strategies which are based on "opportunity" and foresight.

Proactive policy is a forward-looking, preventative approach to governance or management that anticipates future challenges and takes action to address them before they escalate into crises. Unlike reactive policies that respond to existing problems, proactive policies focus on planning, risk management, and long-term sustainability to improve outcomes, such as enhancing safety, promoting equality, or reducing environmental impacts.

Key aspects of proactive policy include: Anticipation and Foresight: Using trend analysis, forecasting, and scenario planning to identify potential issues before they occur.

Preventive Focus: Designing solutions that intervene early to avoid or mitigate negative consequences, such as implementing safety protocols to prevent workplace accidents.

Strategic Planning: Integrating long-term goals and sustainability considerations into initial decision-making rather than correcting issues later.

Continuous Improvement: Regularly updating policies to keep them relevant to changing environments.

Resource Allocation: Allocating funds and effort to prevent future crises, even if the problem is not currently pressing.

Examples of proactive policies include:

Environmental Policy: Implementing carbon emission limits and investing in renewable energy to mitigate climate change.

Cybersecurity: Using ethical hackers to find vulnerabilities before malicious attackers do.

Public Health: Implementing disease prevention measures (e.g., vaccination programs) rather than only treating patients.

Urban Management: Adopting sustainable, long-term city planning to manage future population growth and infrastructure needs.

Proactive policies are often more challenging to implement than reactive ones because they require foresight, investment, and convincing stakeholders to address problems that are not immediately visible.

Musafir hain ham bhi musafir ho tum bhi, kisi mod par phir mulaqat hogi!

The National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) is India's apex statutory body for disaster management, established under the Disaster Management Act of 2005 and headed by the Prime Minister. It formulates policies, plans, and guidelines to ensure a timely, proactive, and coordinated response to natural and man-made disasters.

# WHO calls for action on Cancer Prevention, Child Nutrition and Emergency Care



■ MOHAMMAD HANIEF

The World Health Organization (WHO) has issued a series of urgent warnings highlighting how preventable diseases, poor nutrition and underfunded health systems are converging into a global health crisis, placing millions of lives at risk. New analyses released ahead of World Cancer Day, alongside updated guidance on school food environments and a global humanitarian appeal for 2026, underscore the need for coordinated international action to address health threats before they escalate further.

At the centre of WHO's warning is the finding that up to four in ten cancer cases worldwide could be prevented. A major global analysis conducted with the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) estimates that 37 percent of all new cancer cases in 2022—around 7.1 million diagnoses—were linked to preventable causes. Drawing on data from 185 countries and 36 cancer types, the study provides the most comprehensive assessment to date of how behavioural, environmental, occupational and infectious risks continue to drive the global cancer burden.

Tobacco use remains the leading preventable cause of cancer globally, responsible for 15 per cent of all new cases, followed by infections at 10 per cent and alcohol consumption at 3 per cent. Other major contributors include high body mass index, physical inactivity, air pollution and

exposure to ultraviolet radiation. For the first time, the analysis incorporates nine cancer-causing infections, highlighting the critical role of vaccination and infection control in cancer prevention.

Three cancers—lung, stomach and cervical—accounted for nearly half of all preventable cancer cases worldwide. Lung cancer was largely linked to smoking and air pollution, stomach cancer to infection with Helicobacter pylori, and cervical cancer overwhelmingly to human papillomavirus (HPV). Despite the availability of effective preventive tools, including tobacco control measures, vaccines and screening programmes, these cancers continue to claim lives, particularly in low- and middle-income countries.

The burden of preventable cancer was found to be significantly higher among men than women, with 45 per cent of new cancer cases in men linked to avoidable causes compared with 30 per cent in women. Regional disparities were also pronounced, reflecting differences in exposure to risk factors, socioeconomic development, health policies and system capacity. These findings reinforce the importance of prevention strategies tailored to national and regional contexts rather than uniform global solutions.

At the same time, WHO has drawn attention to another growing health challenge with long-term consequences: poor nutrition among children. In newly released guidelines on healthy school food environments, the organization warns that unhealthy diets are accelerating a global rise in childhood overweight and obesity, even as undernutrition continues to affect millions. In 2025, an estimated 188 million school-aged children and adolescents were living with obesity worldwide, representing roughly one in ten children and, for the first time, exceeding the number of children

who are underweight.

This dual burden of malnutrition poses serious risks to physical health, cognitive development and educational outcomes, while increasing vulnerability to noncommunicable diseases later in life, including cancer, diabetes and cardiovascular disease. WHO argues that schools represent one of the most powerful settings for early intervention, as children spend a significant portion of their formative years there and often consume at least one daily meal at school.

Globally, around 466 million children receive meals through school feeding programmes each day, making them among the largest public nutrition interventions in the world. However, WHO notes that the nutritional quality of school meals varies widely and is frequently undermined by the widespread availability of foods high in sugar, salt and unhealthy fats sold in school canteens, vending machines and nearby outlets. These environments often normalize unhealthy eating patterns and make nutritious choices less accessible.

The new guideline calls for a comprehensive, whole-school approach to nutrition, covering all foods and beverages available during the school day. It emphasizes the need for mandatory nutrition standards aligned with national dietary guidelines, restrictions on the marketing of unhealthy foods to children, and supportive measures that make healthier options more attractive and affordable. WHO also highlights the importance of nutrition education and coordinated action across sectors, including health, education, agriculture and local government.

Equity is a central concern in the guidance. Children from low-income and marginalized communities are often the most

reliant on school meals for daily nutrition and the most exposed to unhealthy food environments. Improving the quality of school food in these settings can reduce health disparities while supporting learning, attendance and long-term well-being. WHO frames investment in healthy school food not only as a health measure, but as a social and educational intervention with lasting benefits.

These warnings come as health systems worldwide are under increasing strain from conflict, climate change and recurring disease outbreaks. Reflecting this pressure, WHO has launched its global health emergency appeal for 2026, seeking nearly US\$1 billion to support essential health services for people affected by humanitarian crises. The appeal aims to respond to 36 emergencies worldwide, including 14 classified as Grade 3, the highest level of organizational response.

In 2025, humanitarian funding fell below 2016 levels, leaving WHO and its partners able to reach only about one-third of the 81 million people initially targeted for health assistance. Despite these constraints, emergency funding enabled support for around 30 million people, including life-saving vaccinations for 5.3 million children, more than 50 million health consultations, support for over 8,000 health facilities and the deployment of nearly 1,400 mobile clinics.

For 2026, priority emergency settings include Afghanistan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Haiti, Myanmar, the occupied Palestinian territory, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, the Syrian Arab Republic, Ukraine and Yemen, alongside ongoing outbreaks of diseases such as cholera and mpox. As the lead agency for health response in humanitarian settings, WHO coordinates more than 1,500 partners across 24 crisis contexts, focusing on keep-

ing health facilities operational, delivering emergency medical care, preventing outbreaks and restoring routine immunization.

WHO has emphasized that the challenges highlighted in its recent releases are deeply interconnected. Poor nutrition in childhood increases the risk of obesity and noncommunicable diseases later in life, including preventable cancers. Weak prevention policies and under-resourced health systems leave populations more vulnerable to disease, while humanitarian crises further disrupt access to care, vaccination and early diagnosis.

Early, predictable investment in health—whether through cancer prevention, healthier food environments or emergency preparedness—is repeatedly identified as one of the most cost-effective ways to save lives, reduce long-term costs and build resilience. Prevention and preparedness, WHO argues, are no longer optional priorities but essential pillars of global health security.

As the world marks World Cancer Day and confronts widening health inequalities, WHO's message is clear: many of today's most serious health challenges are preventable, but only if governments act decisively. Strong tobacco control, vaccination against cancer-causing infections, healthier school food systems and sustained support for emergency health responses together form a roadmap for protecting current and future generations. Without coordinated global action, the cost will be measured not only in rising disease and death, but in lost human potential and deepening inequality.

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

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**f**

# Valedictory of MSME Biofertilizer Training at FoA Wadura

## HT NEWS NETWORK

**WADURA, FEB 4:** The valedictory function of the one-week MSME-sponsored training programme on "Business and Production Management of Biofertilizer Technology for Entrepreneurship" was held with enthusiasm at the Faculty of Agriculture (FoA), Wadura.

The training programme was coordinated by Dr. Inayat Mustafa Khan, Course Coordinator, who briefed the gathering about the objectives, structure, and outcomes of the programme. He stated that

the initiative aimed at imparting hands-on training and managerial skills in biofertilizer production, enabling participants to explore entrepreneurship opportunities in the agri-input sector.

The Dean, Faculty of Agriculture, Wadura, who presided over the valedictory session as the Chief Guest, lauded the efforts of the organizing team and emphasized the growing relevance of biofertilizers in sustainable and eco-friendly agriculture. He underlined the role of MSME-supported programmes in promoting self-employment, innovation, and startup culture among educated youth.



Ms. Asma Shakeel, PhD Scholar, acted as the Student Convenor

and was instrumental in ensuring the smooth conduct of the programme. She expressed her gratitude to the faculty members, resource persons, and participants for their active involvement and cooperation throughout the week-long training.

The programme concluded with the distribution of certificates among the participants, followed by a formal vote of thanks, marking the successful completion of the capacity-building initiative aimed at strengthening agri-entrepreneurship and sustainable farming practices.

## Justice Nargal reviews development of Judicial Infrastructure in Samba

## HT NEWS NETWORK

**SAMBA, FEB 04:** Justice Wasim Sadiq Nargal, Judge High Court of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh and Administrative Judge for Samba district, today conducted an extensive visit to the District Court Complex, Samba.

The Judge was accorded a distinguished welcome by the Principal District & Sessions Judge, Ashwani Kumar Sharma, senior judicial officers, officers of the Civil Administration and Police department & the Bar members.

In a deeply reflecting keynote address, Justice Wasim Sadiq Nargal delivered a series of profound observations on the role, responsibilities and constitutional mission of the District Judiciary, drawing upon jurisprudential wisdom and the lived realities of the justice system.

Justice Nargal invoked the recent words of the Chief Justice of India, Justice Surya Kant, emphasising that true justice resides at the grassroots, for it is here that a citizen first approaches the legal system in defence of his rights. He underscored that when the district judiciary is strong, the heart of the Constitution beats with renewed vitality.

He noted that though Samba is a comparatively young district, it has steadily gained judicial relevance, especially for the border belt.

Justice Nargal emphasised that infrastructure is not merely physical construction but the entire ecosystem; courtrooms, digital systems, libraries, public facilities, human resources necessary for justice to be dispensed with dignity, efficiency and accessibility. He stressed that infrastructure improvement is a constitutional obligation, not an administrative formality.

Reiterating that "Justice delayed is justice denied," he observed that pendency not only burdens the litigant but weighs upon the conscience of every judge. However, he cautioned that even while ensuring expeditious disposal, the quality of justice must never be compromised. Access to justice, he stated, flows directly from Articles 14 and 21 and is a constitutional command, not a matter of convenience or charity.

He highlighted the judicial shift towards e-filing, virtual hearings, digital records and online access to court services. The e-Courts project, he said, has brought transparency, efficiency and accessibility even in



remote districts. Technology, he stated, must become a reliable facilitator of justice and not merely an administrative enhancement.

Justice Nargal spoke with emphasis on indispensable harmony between the Bench and the Bar. He reminded that patience, professionalism and ethical discipline are the hallmarks of the legal fraternity. He urged the young lawyers to persevere with character, dignity and hard work, stressing that "Integrity will outlast brilliance; character will outshine cleverness."

He strongly advocated for mediation and conciliation, calling them humane, efficient and socially restorative methods that preserve relationships and reduce pendency. He addressed judicial officers directly, reminding them that their conduct is the face of the judiciary. Patience, impartiality, dignity and courtesy must define their daily functioning. He expressed gratitude to the silent workforce clerks, stenographers, process servers, recordkeepers whose dedication ensures that justice never falters.

Justice Nargal concluded with the timeless principle "Justice must not only be done, but must also appear to have been done." He urged all stakeholders to guard this principle with humility, vigilance, and unwavering fidelity to constitutional values. Aligned with the formally circulated agenda for the visit, Justice Nargal convened three separate review meetings.

In a meeting with the District Administration led by Deputy Commissioner Samba, Ayushi Sudan, Justice Nargal reviewed matters related to furnishing and urgent repair of residential quarters of judicial officers. Other issues included need for immediate improvement in sanitation, cleanliness and waste-management systems in the complex, black-topping and

levelling of internal roads, ensuring uninterrupted power supply, including the status of backup systems and solar installations, progress on boundary wall and main entrance gate, key to perimeter security, establishment of a J&K Bank Extension Counter within the complex and creation of a designated area for photocopy/documentation vendors.

The Deputy Commissioner assured full cooperation and expedited execution of all pending civil works.

In a meeting with the Police department, led by Senior Superintendent of Police, Varinder Singh Manhas, Justice Nargal undertook a detailed review of, strengthening of the security grid of the District Court Complex, construction of a Security Guard Room, provision of washroom facilities for security personnel, review of security and storage arrangements in the Malkhana, including seized articles, streamlining the movement of litigants and vehicles for dignified entry and safety of all.

The SSP briefed on current arrangements and assured enhanced coordination with the court authorities.

In a meeting with the Bar Association, Samba, led by President Ajay Singh Charak, Justice Nargal discussed progress on Lawyers Chambers Phase-II including utilities and construction status, adequate seating space for the Prosecution Wing within court premises, cooperation between Bench and Bar for reducing adjournments, promoting ADR, enhancing the overall institutional environment and strengthening mentorship culture for young advocates.

Members of the Bar expressed gratitude to Justice Nargal for his constructive guidance and reaffirmed their commitment to collaborative institutional advancement.

## Weekly Block Diwas programme

## DC Ramban listens to public grievances at Khari

## HT NEWS NETWORK

**RAMBAN, FEB 04:** Deputy Commissioner Ramban, Mohammad Alyas Khan, today convened a Public Grievance Redressal Camp at Khari under weekly Block Diwas programme aimed at reaching out to people in far-flung areas to solve their problems. During the camp, the Deputy Commissioner patiently listened to public grievances and resolved most of the issues related to civic amenities, services and supplies on the spot by issuing necessary directions to the concerned departments.

The camp witnessed active participation from

public representatives, including the DDC Member.

A team of officers, including SDM Banjhal Mohammad Naseeb Bajran; Assistant Commissioner Development Sheraz Ahmed; Chief Planning Officer Dr. Shakeeb Ahmed Rather; Tehsildar Khari, Chief Medical Officer, Chief Education Officer, Chief Animal Husbandry Officer, Child Development Project Officer, Block Development Officer, besides officers from the line departments were present to respond and document the public demands.

Responding to health services related issues, the Deputy Commissioner

informed that an amount of ₹3.75 crore has been allocated to strengthen health-care services in three Primary Health Centres and ten Health Sub-Centres in the area, which includes provision for a Mobile Health Van.

Expressing concern over recent fire incidents, the Deputy Commissioner asked the SDM to prepare a detailed report of the affected families. He informed that the district administration has decided to make available fire extinguishers in vulnerable areas to prevent major fire incidents. "The matter has already been taken up with the Fire and Emergency Services Department" he added. Regarding

forest clearance issues affecting road projects, the Deputy Commissioner directed the executing agencies to pursue the matter with the concerned authorities to ensure early resolution. On the issue of lack of mobile connectivity in upper areas of Block Khari, he informed that necessary directions have already been issued and the problem would be resolved soon.

The Deputy Commissioner urged the public to avail maximum benefits of government welfare schemes. The officers from the line departments guided the public on the process of applying for the benefits of different schemes.

## Government Of Jammu & Kashmir Office Of The Tehsildar Kreeri (Executive Magistrate 1st Class)

Subject: Issuance of Registration Orders in respect of delayed Birth/ Death certificate.

### PUBLIC NOTICE

The Registrar Births and Deaths (Block Development Officer Wagoora/ chokedar) has submitted case file pertaining to Birth of SADAF NASEER D/O NASEER AHMAD SHAH R/O PUSNAG Tehsil KREERI Distr. Baramulla having verified the date of Birth as 04/11/1999 and event has been shown to be occurred at HOME for issuance of delay order. In this connection.

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

Sd/- Executive Magistrate 1st Class Kreeri

### Public Notice

I am applying for fresh Pesticide License situated at Dangerpora sopore In this regard if anybody is having any objection may file the same to PPO Lal Mandi Srinagar within the time period of 07 days from the date of Publication of this notice. After that no objection shall be entertained.

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## Union Territory Jammu & Kashmir OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER R&B DIVISION SOPORE

### NOTICE INVITING TENDER

NIT No: 159 of RnB-Sopore of 2025-2026 e-tendering | Dated: 04.02.2026

For and on behalf of the Lt. Governor, J&K, e-tenders (in Single Cover System) are invited on Percentage rate basis from approved and eligible contractors registered with J&K State Govt. CPWD, Railways and other State/Central Governments for the following works:

S.No.	Name of Work	Adv. Cost	T.D Cost	E/M	Position of TS
1	Upgradation of road at Gund Brath and Brath Kalan by way of Providing and laying of Nallah muck, WBM grade 2nd and laying of RCC pipes( Gund Brath)	9.686	600/-	19372/-	139 /TS of 2025-26 dated:04.02.2026 Rs. 9.787 lacs
2	Upgradation of road at Gund Brath and Brath Kalan by way of Providing and laying of Nallah muck, WBM grade 2nd and laying of RCC pipes( Brath Kalan)	9.787	600/-	19574/-	140 /TS of 2025-26 dated:04.02.2026 Rs. 9.69 lacs

Time for completion of work: 30 Days

Class of Contractor: DEE / CEE

Project Authority: DDC Baramulla

Position of funds: Available

dated:11.12.2025

1. The Bidding documents consisting of qualifying information, eligibility criteria, specifications, Drawings, bill of quantities (B.O.Q), Set of terms and conditions of contract and other detail's can be seen/downloaded from the departmental website www.jktenders.gov.in as per schedule of dates given below

1	Date of issue of tender Notice	04 .02.2026
2	Period of downloading of bidding documents	04 .02.2026
3	Bid Submission start date	04 .02.2026
4	Bid submission End date	16.02.2026 (4.00 PM)
5	Date and time of opening of bides (online)	17.02.2026(12 PM) in the office of Ex. Engineer R&B Division, Sopore

2. Bids must be accompanied by a Treasury Challan (dated between the bid start date and the Bid Submission End date) with NIT No. Name of work and S.No. deposited in M.H. 0059 in the name of Executive Engineer R&B Division, Sopore (tender inviting authority) as the cost of the tender document.

2. At the time of tendering, all bidders must upload earnest money/bid security equal to 2% of the Advertised Cost in the form of CDR/FDR/BG pledged to the tender receiving authority, i.e. Executive Engineer R&B Division Sopore. Besides that, the successful bidder will have to provide Performance Security @ 5% at the time of contract award, strictly in accordance with the Government's circular instructions from time to time. The earnest money/bid security of 2% will be released after submission of a performance security of 5% of the quoted cost which will be released after completion of the DLP/Maintenance Period.

3(b). Geotag Photographs Minimum 03 sets (01 set Comprising of Photograph before, during and after execution of work) of size 26 cm x 21 cm to be provided.

Unbalanced Bid: In case bid of the successful bidder is unbalanced, the Successful bidder will have to provide additional performance security in the shape of CDR/FDR/BG pledged to Executive Engineer R&B Division Sopore (tender receiving authority) vide Principal Secretary to Government Finance department's circular issued under endorsement No: DF-Code/ 441/ 2021-02-158 dated" 8.8.2002.

a: Where the bid price is below 10% but not below 20% of the project cost put to bid, the additional performance guarantee/security percentage shall be Incremented by 0.1% for every percentage of bid price below 10% of the project cost put to bid starting at 11% with the additional bid performance guarantee being 0.1% and this additional performance guarantee percentage shall be applied on the bid price.

b: Where the bid price is 20% or more below of the project cost put to bid, the additional performance guarantee percentage shall be Incremented by 0.2% for every percentage of bid price below 20% of the project cost put to bid in addition to 1% of the bid price and this additional performance guarantee percentage shall be applied on the bid price.

c: The additional performance guarantee percentage shall be rounded off to the next lower percentage based on whether the decimal point of the percentage of bid price is below 0.5% or next higher percentage based on whether the decimal point of the percentage of bid price is 0.5% or more.

d: The additional performance security shall be treated as part of the performance security. Additional performance security shall be taken only after approval of next higher authority.

The additional performance security shall be released only after successful completion of work.

4: The date and time of opening of Bids shall be notified on web Site www.jktenders.gov.in and conveyed to the bidders automatically through an e-mail message on their e-mail address. The bids of Responsive bidders shall be opened online on same web site in the office of the Tender receiving authority .

5: The bids for the work shall remain valid for a period of 120 days from the date of opening of technical Bids.

6: Instruction to bidders regarding e-tendering process.

6.1: Bidders are advised to download bid submission manual from the "Downloads" option as well as from "Bidders Manual Kit" on website www.jktenders.gov.in acquaint bid submission process.

6.2: To participate in bidding process, bidders have to get 'Digital Signature Certificate (DSC)' as per Information Technology Act-2000. Bidders can get digital certificate from any approved vendor.

6.3: The bidders have to submit their bids online in electronic format with digital Signature. No Financial bid will be accepted in physical form.

6.4: Bids will be opened online as per time schedule mentioned in Para-I

6.5: Bidders must ensure to upload scanned copy of all necessary documents with bid. Note: - Scan all the documents on 100 dpi with black and white option.

No: 10243-52 | Dated: 04.02.2026

DIPK: 10604/25 | Dated: 04-02-2026

Sd/- Executive Engineer, R&B Division Sopore

# Govt takes slew of measures to curb air pollution: Javed Rana

'Imposes moratorium on new polluting units in Khrew-Khonmoh'

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

**SRINAGAR FEB 4** The government has taken a slew of measures to control air pollution in Khrew and Khonmoh areas of Pulwama, reiterating its commitment towards safeguarding public health and ensuring environmentally sustainable industrial development through strict monitoring and enforcement.

Replies to a question raised by MLA Hasnain Masoodi, Minister for Forest, Ecology, Environment Javed Ahmed Rana today informed the Legislative Assembly that Cement industries operating in the Union Territory have been directed by the J&K Pollution Control Committee (JK PCC) to install Continuous Ambient Air Quality Monitoring Systems (CAAQMS) for regular monitoring of air quality. Two CAAQMS have been installed in Khrew and Khonmoh, respectively, for continuous monitoring, he added.

He informed that Cement Industries with production capacity of 200 Tonnes Per Day (TPD) have installed Online Continuous Emission Monitoring System (OCEMS) and real time data generated is being uploaded on Central Pollution Control Board.

He added that the Cement



plants have been advised to install advanced emission control devices, including Automatic Pulse Jet Bag Filters, Reverse Air Bag Filters and Electrostatic Precipitators (ESPs) to minimize the air pollution. To scientifically assess the air quality scenario, the JK PCC has assigned a study on air quality in Khrew and Khonmoh areas to the University of Kashmir, he added.

Regarding the grant of mining lease, the Minister said that the government has granted 9 mining leases in the Khrew-Wuyan area of Pulwama district, of which, four are operational and functioning strictly in accordance with the approved Mining Plans, Environmental Clearances (EC), Consents to Operate (CTO) and other statutory provisions. The remaining five (05) mining leases

are non-operational due to want of EC and CTO, he added.

The Minister said that all leases had been granted under the provisions of the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act and Rules and are made operational only after obtaining necessary No-Objection Certificates from the concerned stakeholders.

In order to further curb

pollution, Javed Rana informed the House that J&K PCC imposed a moratorium on establishment of new air-polluting industries in Khrew and Khonmoh areas.

The moratorium shall remain in force for cement plants, stone crushers, hot mix plants, brick kilns and mining activities until the annual average Air Quality Index (AQI) falls below 100 or the Comprehensive Environmental Pollution Index (CEPI) falls below 60, he apprised the House.

The Forest Minister said that the J&K PCC has advised the concerned departments and stakeholders to ensure proper macadamization and maintenance of roads, transportation of cement in sealed conditions, covered transportation of raw materials and crushed material without overloading besides regular sprinkling of water on roads.

Regarding the use of Pet Coke, the government clarified that its usage is being regulated under the Jammu and Kashmir Pet Coke and Furnace Oil Policy. He added that the Industries using Pet Coke are required to obtain authorization under the Hazardous Waste (Management and Transboundary Movement) Rules, 2016 and install Flue Gas Desulphurization (FGD) systems with sulphur removal efficiency of more than 90 percent.

**SRINAGAR, FEBRUARY 04:** District Legal Services Authority (DLSA) Srinagar conducted an awareness programme under the guidance of Haq Nawaz Zargar, Chairman DLSA, Srinagar and overall supervision of Secretary DLSSA, Srinagar on the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989 in tribal areas of Dara, Faqir Gujri Srinagar.



The programme was organized through Para Legal Volunteers (PLVs) and members of the Samvaad Committee with the aim of educating tribal communities about their legal rights and protections available under the Act.

During the programme, the resource person highlighted the key provisions of the Act, emphasizing the safeguards provided to members of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes against atrocities, discrimination, and exploitation.

The participants were informed about the legal remedies available, the procedure for lodging complaints, and the role of legal aid institutions in ensuring justice to victims.

The PLVs actively interacted with the local population and distributed informative material to enhance awareness regarding free legal services available through DLSSA Srinagar. The members of the committee stressed the importance of timely reporting of offences and assured necessary legal assistance to the victims.

The programme witnessed active participation from members of the tribal community, who appreciated the initiative taken by DLSSA Srinagar in spreading legal awareness and empowering marginalized sections of society.

DLSSA Srinagar reiterated its commitment to continue conducting such awareness programmes to ensure access to justice for all, particularly for vulnerable and marginalized communities.

## DC Baramulla chairs DLIC Meeting; Approves 458 cases under Mission Yuva Programme

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

**BARAMULLA, FEBRUARY 04:** Deputy Commissioner (DC) Baramulla, Minga Sherpa, today chaired a meeting of District Level Implementation Committee (DLIC) Baramulla at the DC office meeting hall and approved 458 fresh cases under the Mission YUVA programme. At the outset, the chair was comprehensively briefed about the current status of the cases that were approved in previous DLIC meetings and several new cases of unemployed eligible youth in the district were presented to the Committee.

After thoroughly reviewing the cases, the DC approved 458 cases, thereby enabling them to explore self-employment avenues to significantly



improve their livelihoods.

Reviewing the implementation status, the DC reiterated the district administration's commitment to providing full institutional support to ensure seamless processing of applications and sustained handholding of aspiring entrepreneurs.

The DC also instructed the concerned departments and officers to fast-track

the processing of applications and timely preparation of Detailed Project Reports (DPRs) so that financial assistance reaches the beneficiaries without delay.

The meeting was attended by the Assistant Director Employment, Baramulla; Lead District Manager; Cluster Head, J&K Bank; District General Manager, NABARD among others.

## SWD Srinagar conducts PMMVY registration drive

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

**SRINAGAR, FEBRUARY 04:** Department of Social Welfare (SWD), Srinagar, through SANKALP-Hub for Empowerment of Women (Mission Shakti), successfully organized a registration drive under the Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana (PMMVY) at LD Hospital Wazir Bagh, Gousia Hospital Khanyar, and JLNM Hospital Rainawari.

The primary objective of the drive was to identify and enroll eligible pregnant women and lactating mothers under PMMVY, ensure last-mile delivery of maternity benefits, and enhance institutional outreach of the scheme. The drive also aimed at creating awareness among beneficiaries regarding the financial assistance, eligibility conditions, and procedural requirements of the scheme.

During the drive, beneficiaries visiting OPDs, antenatal clinics, and maternity wards were mobilized, counseled, and guided through the registration process. On-the-spot registrations were carried out with the assistance of concerned health functionaries to ensure accuracy and timely enrolment. As a result, 51 eligible beneficiaries were successfully registered under PMMVY across the three hospitals.

The staff of SANKALP-HEW Srinagar coordinated closely with medical officers, nursing staff, and frontline health workers to facilitate smooth implementation of the drive. Special emphasis was laid on ensuring proper documentation, Aadhaar seeding, and verification to avoid future grievances and delays in benefit disbursement.

The registration drive contributed significantly to improving awareness, strengthening institutional convergence between the Social Welfare and Health Departments, and increasing the enrolment rate under PMMVY. The proactive support and cooperation of hospital authorities, health personnel, and field staff played a pivotal role in the successful conduct of the initiative.

Such drives will continue to be organized in the future to ensure maximum coverage of eligible beneficiaries, promote maternal health and nutrition, and further strengthen the effective implementation of women-centric welfare schemes under Mission Shakti.

## DC Baramulla distributes Compensation Cheque to Dependents of Accident Victim

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

**BARAMULLA, FEBRUARY 04:** Deputy Commissioner (DC) Baramulla, Minga Sherpa, in the presence of ALC Baramulla, Rahil Amin, today distributed a compensation cheque worth 12.78 Lac to the dependents of accident victims under the provisions of the Employees Compensation Act, 1923 at his office chambers. The compensation pertains to the unfortunate death of Mohammad Ashraf Malik, who lost his life in a work-related accident on 13 October 2025 at the worksite at Kanispura, Baramulla.

The amount was disbursed to the dependents of the deceased in accordance with the statutory provisions of the Employees Compensation Act. On the occasion, the DC expressed deep sympathy with the bereaved family and emphasized that the district administration remains fully committed to safeguarding the welfare and rights of workers and their families. Minga Sherpa further stated that timely disbursement of compensation in cases of workplace fatalities is a priority for the administration, ensuring that affected families receive financial support without undue delay.

## DC Kishtwar reviews status of departmental court cases

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

**KISHTWAR, FEBRUARY 04:** Deputy Commissioner Kishtwar, Pankaj Kumar Sharma today reviewed the status of departmental court cases here at a meeting held at DC Office Complex.

The Deputy Commissioner inquired about the filing of replies and objections by concerned departments in cases pending before different courts. Emphasis was laid on cases where ex parte proceedings have been initiated due to non-filing

of replies or non-appearance before the Courts.

The performance of Standing Counsels was also reviewed, with focus on compliance with court directions, coordination with departments and safeguarding of Government interests.

The Deputy Commissioner stressed improved coordination between departments and the District Litigation Office to ensure robust legal representation.

Referring to the cases involving

more than one department, the DC

asked for filing consolidated reply, unless there are specific directions from the Courts for filing of separate response by each department.

The modalities for expediting the cases involving huge financial implications, policy decisions, besides filing of appeals, revisions against the orders passed by the subordinate courts were also discussed in the meeting.

The Deputy Commissioner directed all concerned officers to give priority to court matters and ensure strict adherence to timelines

to avoid adverse judicial outcomes. Regular monitoring and reviewing of court cases were emphasized to ensure accountability and effective disposal.

The meeting was attended by ADC, Pawan Kotwal; CEO KDA, Kaiser Bhawani; ACD, Manoj Kumar; SDM Paddar, Dr. Amit Kumar; SDM Chatroo, Nayeem Ur Rehman; ACP, Neeraj Sharma, CEO, Sanjay Dogra, ExEn Jal Shakti, Rohit Wadera; CMO, Dr. Yudhvir Singh Kotwal; DLO Abdul Majid Kelam, ExEn PMGSY Marwah and other Officers and concerned staff.

## GAMEPOINT SECURES ₹7 CR PRE-SERIES A FUNDING TO ACCELERATE CENTRE EXPANSION

■ UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

**HYDERABAD, FEB 4 :** Gamepoint, a technology-enabled sports infrastructure startup, has raised ₹7 crore in a Pre-Series A funding round as it looks to scale its multi-sport centre network and strengthen its digital and operational backbone.

The round was led by Dr Raj P Narayanan, Founder of Zaggles, and Aditya Vuchi, General Partner at VC Mint, with participation from Praveen Raju and other investors, the startup company said in a release here on Wednesday.

Founded by Aditya Reddy and Siddharth Reddy, Gamepoint operates a chain of professionally managed, technology-driven multi-sport centres offering coaching programmes, pay-and-play formats, memberships, and corporate sports solutions.

The company currently operates across Hyderabad and Warangal.



From a business perspective, the funding will enable Gamepoint to pursue an aggressive scale-up strategy.

Over the next five years, the startup plans to expand to more than 300 centres across metro, Tier I and Tier II cities, targeting access for over one crore sports participants nationwide.

A significant portion of the capital will also be invested in strengthening its proprietary technology platform to improve customer experience, optimise centre utilisation, and enhance operational efficiency.

Commenting on the investment, the founders in a joint statement said the funding positions the company to consolidate its leadership

in Hyderabad while accelerating entry into new markets. Investors highlighted Gamepoint's disciplined expansion model, predictable unit economics, and rising demand for organised sports infrastructure driven by increasing health awareness and policy support.

With initiatives such as the Khelo India Mission gaining momentum and India preparing to host the Commonwealth Games 2026 while bidding for the Olympic Games 2036, the organised sports and fitness segment is expected to see sustained investment. Gamepoint aims to capitalise on this tailwind by building a scalable, asset-light yet technology-led sports centre network across the country.

To date, the company has trained over 12,000 students, enabled more than three lakh people to play sports, and organised over 700 sports events, underlining its growing traction in India's organised sports ecosystem. UNI

## Boeing invites applications for Fifth Edition of BUILD Programme

■ UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

**HYDERABAD, FEB 4 :** Boeing on Tuesday announced the opening of applications for the fifth edition of its Boeing University Innovation Leadership Development (BUILD) programme for 2025-26, reinforcing its long-standing support for India's student innovators and early-stage startups.

Launched in 2019, BUILD enables graduates and early-stage startup entrepreneurs from across India to pitch and develop their ideas by connecting them with incubators, investors, and Boeing's industry expertise - helping concepts mature into market-ready solutions.

By bringing together academia, industry, incubators, and investors within a structured and integrated platform, BUILD helps de-risk early innovation, strengthens startup readiness, and accelerates the journey from concept to deployment.

Over five editions, the programme has supported thousands of graduates and startups nationwide, accelerating ideas and solutions in India's startup ecosystem across aerospace, defence, technology, sustainability, and social impact sectors.

Bill McSherry, vice president, State Advocacy and Global Engagement, Boeing said, "With BUILD's proven track record in helping shape students' and entrepreneurs' dreams and ambitions, we are proud to support the next leap this program is set to take."

Salil Gupte, president, Boeing India and South Asia said, "India's startup community brings bold thinking and deep technical capability. Over the past five years, BUILD has nurtured this capability - giving wings to ideas, offering mentorship, industry expertise, and opportunity to scale up - to thousands of students, and enabled concepts to mature into capabilities".

Boeing continues to partner with seven incubators -- Society for Innovation -- IIT Mumbai, Foundation for Innovation and



Technology Transfer -- IIT Delhi, Innovation and Entrepreneurship Center -- IIT Gandhinagar, IIT Madras -- Incubation Cell, Society for Innovation and Development -- IISc Bengaluru, T-Hub Hyderabad, and Technology Business Incubator -- KIIT Bhubaneswar, to organize BUILD in India.

Applicants are now invited to submit ideas in the fields of aerospace and defense, technology, social impact, and sustainability.

The shortlisted teams will compete at a regional-level boot camp, and the finalists will pitch their ideas to subject-matter experts on Boeing Immersion Day and BUILD finals, to be held in July 2026.

The winners will get a grant of INR 10 lakh each to support the development of their ideas. Boeing mentors and industry experts will interact and closely work with the finalists to refine and suggest ways to convert these ideas into viable business offerings.

Interested students and entrepreneurs can apply here - <https://www.boeing.co.in/boeing-in-india/build>. The deadline for submissions is April 4, 2026. UNI

## Rourkela Steel Plant achieves record-breaking performance in FY 2025-26

■ UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

**BHUBANESWAR, FEB 4 :** Rourkela Steel Plant (RSP), a flagship unit of Maharatna company SAIL, has set new benchmarks across multiple production and dispatch parameters during the first ten months of the financial year 2025-26.

Demonstrating robust operational efficiency, the plant recorded its best-ever April-January performance, surpassing previous records in key areas of steel production, hot metal output, and logistics.



RSP produced 34,57,761 tonnes of saleable steel between April 2025 and January 2026, overtaking its previous best of 34,35,767 tonnes in the same period last year. This growth was driven by stellar performances across its units:

Hot Strip Mill-2 (HSM-2) rolled 22,06,432 tonnes of HR coils, exceeding its previous record of 21,16,097 tonnes. Its New Sheet Shearing Line (SSL) also achieved a milestone by producing 2,59,870 tonnes of HR plates, marking a 23% increase over last year.

New Plate Mill produced 8,25,999 tonnes of plates, surpassing its earlier best of 7,73,779 tonnes.

Blast Furnace-5 'Durga' recorded a record 26,97,961 tonnes of hot metal, while Blast Furnace-1 'Parvati' contributed 8,95,446 tonnes, both achieving their highest-ever outputs. Sinter Plant-III also achieved its top performance with 30,97,986 tonnes of sinter produced.

RSP also made strides in logistics, registering a record single-day road dispatch of 5,576 tonnes on January 30, 2026. The Traffic & Raw Materials Department set a new benchmark with 3,04,649 tonnes of rail dispatch in January 2026, carried out in 114 rakes, surpassing the previous record of 2,98,219 tonnes in January 2024. UNI

## RBI MPC to hit pause button: CARE Ratings

■ UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

**CHENNAI, FEB 4 :** The Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) is likely to press the pause button at its policy meeting being held from February 4-6, 2026, credit rating agency CARE Ratings said. The repo rate is the rate at which the RBI lends to the banks and it is currently at 5.25 per cent. "Although inflation projections suggest there is room for another 25-bps rate cut, we believe the MPC will pause and preserve its policy ammunition," CARE Ratings said. According to CARE Ratings, retaining this policy flexibility remains important even after recent trade agreements,

as the global environment remains uncertain and susceptible to geopolitical flare-ups that could materially impact domestic growth and inflation dynamics.

The February monetary policy meeting is likely to be shaped by a benign inflation outlook, healthy growth momentum, and persistent external headwinds.

"The domestic economic environment remains broadly resilient, and since the December policy meeting, India has concluded four trade agreements -- the US, the EU, Oman and New Zealand -- to help cushion the impact of global uncertainties, as these will support growth over the medium to long term," CARE Ratings said. UNI

## Trade agreement with US timely for apparel industry: AEPC chief

■ BY SOURAV SHEKHAR

**NEW DELHI, FEB 4 :** Dr A Sakthivel, Chairman, Apparel Export Promotion Council (AEPC), said the India-US trade deal is timely for the Indian apparel industry, which has been under considerable pressure due to the US tariff rate of 50 pc.

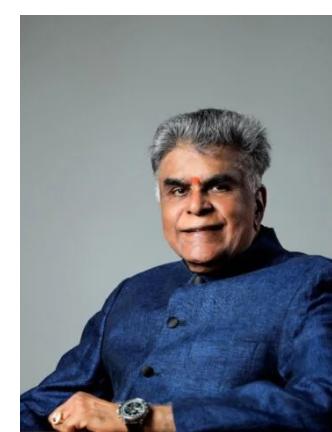
On Monday late night, the United States slashed the steep tariff rates of 50pc which were imposed in August last year, to 18 per cent clearing the roadblock in settling the India-US trade deal.

Sakthivel said the United States is India's single largest apparel export market, and improved trade

terms will significantly enhance the competitiveness of Indian apparel products in the US market.

He noted that this positive development is expected to provide a strong impetus to apparel exports, attract fresh investments across the entire value chain, and further strengthen India's position as a reliable and preferred global sourcing hub.

"Most importantly, the apparel sector, being one of the largest employment generators in the country, will benefit immensely. This move will help safeguard existing jobs and create substantial new employment opportunities, particularly for women workers in labour-intensive segments,"



added Sakthivel.

To tackle the sharp increase in labour requirements, he urged

state and central governments to consider providing a 50 per cent capital subsidy for the construction of hostels, particularly for women workers, along with a 5 per cent interest subsidy on the loan amount availed for the purpose.

Dr Sakthivel further emphasized that exporters should proactively prepare to enhance production capacities, improve operational efficiencies, and modernize their enterprises to effectively leverage the upcoming India-EU Free Trade Agreement and India-US Bilateral Trade Agreement (BTA).

Shedding light on the challenges ahead for the industry, he pointed out that the sector is currently facing a serious issue with regard

to labour availability. He urged exporters to proactively plan and make necessary arrangements to ensure the availability of an adequate and skilled workforce.

In this regard, active collaboration with the Skill Council and other relevant Government agencies is crucial to develop and maintain a steady pool of trained manpower to meet the anticipated growth in the near future.

Collectively, AEPC believes that a strengthened India-US trade relationship will open new avenues for sustainable growth and long-term partnership, delivering mutual benefits to both economies. UNI

## Rane Madras accelerates profitability momentum in Q3 with continued margin expansion

■ UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

**CHENNAI, FEB 4 :** Rane (Madras) Limited accelerated its profitability momentum in Q3 with continued margin expansion.

Announcing its consolidated financial performance for the third quarter (Q3FY26) and nine months (9MFY26) ended December 31, 2025, here today it said Total Revenue grew by 21.3%:

Total Revenue was Rs 1,019.1 Crore for Q3 FY26 compared to Rs 840.5 Crore in Q3 FY25, an increase

of 21.3%.

Sales to Domestic OE customers grew by 18% mainly driven by stronger demand across vehicle segments. Sales to International customers increased by 21% supported by strong offtake of steering products. Sales to Indian Aftermarket customers experienced a 32% growth. The sales of aftermarket products were not comparable to Q3 FY25 due to the restructuring of the Aftermarket Product Business.

EBITDA stood at Rs 94.8 Crore for Q3 FY26 compared to Rs 69.3 Crore in Q3 FY25, an increase

of 36.8%. EBITDA Margin at 9.3% for Q3 FY26 against 8.2% in Q3 FY25. EBITDA margin increased by 106 bps due to the better fixed cost leverage.

PAT stood at Rs 30.5 Crore for Q3 FY26 compared to Rs 0.4 Crore in Q3 FY25, an increase of Rs 30.1 Cr. Last year PAT includes one-time impact of Rs 8.27 Cr on account of tax credit reversal due to the adoption of the new income tax regime in erstwhile Rane Engine Valve Limited. UNI

## Ashok Leyland, PT Pindad signs MoU for development of Electric buses, Defence vehicles for Indonesia

■ UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

**CHENNAI, FEB 4 :** Ashok Leyland, the Indian flagship of the Hinduja Group and leading Commercial and Defence Vehicle manufacturers, today signed a landmark Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with PT Pindad, Indonesia's premier state-owned defence and industrial equipment manufacturer.

The agreement, signed at Pindad's headquarters

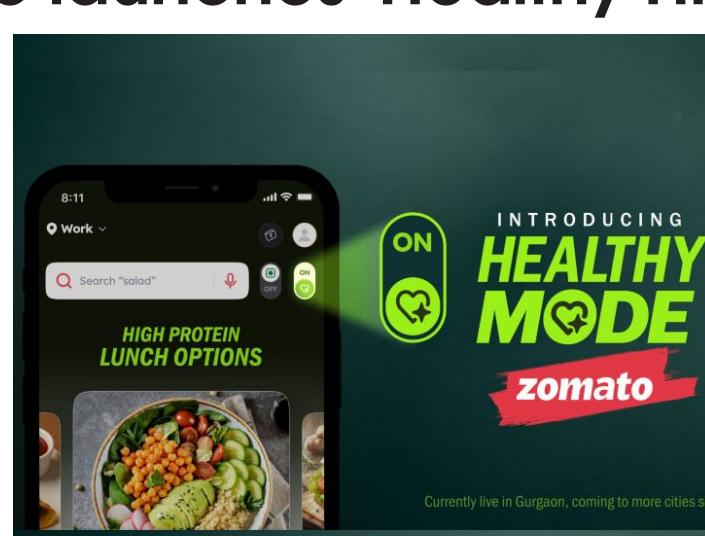


in Bandung, was for joint development of Electric buses and Defence vehicles for Indonesia, a release from Leyland said here. This marked a major milestone in strengthening bilateral cooperation between the two countries in sustainable mobility and advanced defence technologies. The MoU outlines a strategic collaboration for the joint development and manufacturing of Electric Buses (EVs) and Defence Vehicles tailored for Indonesia's growing mobility and national security requirements.

The partnership aims to leverage Ashok Leyland's global expertise in Commercial EV platforms and Defence mobility solutions together with Pindad's deep engineering capabilities, local manufacturing strength, and longstanding contribution to Indonesia's defence ecosystem. The agreement was formalized in the presence of Prof. Sigit P. Santosa, Chief Executive Officer, PT Pindad, Mr. Amadeep Singh, President - International Operations, Defence, LCV & PSB, Ashok Leyland and Lord Tariq, Advisor to the Board, Hinduja Auto. UNI

## Zomato launches 'Healthy High-Five challenge'

■ UNITED NEWS OF INDIA



Healthy Score, which assesses dishes based on protein, complex carbohydrates, fibre, and micronutrients rather than calorie

count alone.

Under the program, four completed High-Fives unlock a free dish from a curated, high-nutrition menu.

From a business standpoint, the reward-based structure is designed to increase order frequency, improve customer stickiness, and deepen engagement within the growing health-conscious consumer segment.

Consumer data indicates a sharp dip in health-led food choices during February, often referred to as the "February Slump".

By launching the challenge during this period, Zomato aims to counter demand fatigue while reinforcing its positioning in the

wellness-driven food discovery space.

The initiative builds on Healthy Mode, introduced late last year with nutritional tags and simplified health scores.

The added layer of incentives and engagement-driven design marks Zomato's continued focus on feature-led differentiation beyond discounts, as it seeks to monetize evolving consumer preferences around nutrition and mindful eating.

The Healthy High-Five Challenge will run through February across seven major cities - Delhi, Mumbai, Bengaluru, Hyderabad, Kolkata, Pune, and Chennai - accessible via the Healthy Mode section on the Zomato app. UNI

# Cummins Eyes IPL After T20 WC Setback

## ■ UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

**MELBOURNE:** Pat Cummins admits aiming to be firing for Australia's monster Test was part of why he pulled out of the T20 World Cup.

The Test and ODI captain has been replaced in Australia's squad for the upcoming tournament in Sri Lanka and India by Ben Dwarshuis.

Cummins has been plagued by a back injury since Australia's tour of the Caribbean last July, with his only match since being the Ashes-clinching win in Adelaide.

When the urn was retained in just 11 days, Cummins and the Australian hierarchy decided he would sit out the final two Tests of the summer with an eye on the T20 World Cup.

But a "minor setback" led to the star quick not risking his long-term health, especially given he endured years of back issues early in his career.

"It was really unfortunate," Cummins, an Amazon Prime Video ambassador, told AAP.

"I feel pretty good, just a minor setback and just ran out of time really."

"I'll rest up for a few weeks and go from there."

"We knew after the [Adelaide] Test match we were going to need somewhere between four and eight weeks to let the bone settle right down before then building back up."

"Initially, we thought it might only be four weeks, because I was feeling really good, but just had a follow-up scan."

"They thought it probably needs an

other couple of weeks, so the timeline just became a bit too tight."

Australia's schedule, starting in August when they host Bangladesh in Darwin and Mackay, is unprecedented.

After the Bangladesh Tests, Australia will embark on a Test tour of South Africa in September for the first time since the infamous "Sandpapergate" series in 2018.

They will return for four home Tests against New Zealand, before being on the road for much of 2027.

Next year involves a five-Test tour of India, the pink-ball 150th anniversary match against England at the MCG, an away Ashes, an ODI World Cup, and a possible World Test Championship final at Lord's.

Cummins said he didn't want to be "chasing his tail" for the monster 18-month period ahead.

"We thought the first half of the year was a pretty good time to be conservative with the amount of cricket that's coming up," the 32-year-old said.

"We'll get it right, then hopefully that will mean you won't have to worry about it, and you can just go out and play all those Test matches."

"Whereas, if you're not careful with it now and it flares up, you're chasing tail a bit." Captain of Sunrisers Hyderabad in the Indian Premier League, Cummins hopes to lead his franchise when the lucrative competition starts on March 26.

"We'll just be guided by my back," he said. "We'll have another scan in a few weeks, and if it's good, then we'll have a slow build-up."



## T20 World Cup: Former SA coach says SA very good squad

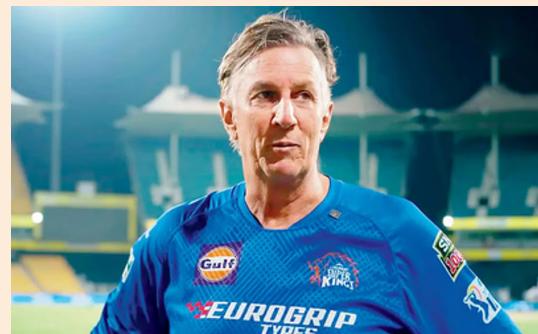
### ■ UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

**CHENNAI:** Like many, former South African cricketer and renowned coach Eric Simons is excited for the T20 World Cup. He said that the Proteas can be a strong contender for the title, but believed co-hosts India would always remain the favourites. In a chat with this daily, Simons explained more on South Africa's chances and how other teams could fare. Excerpts: It is always going to be a more intense tournament when played in India. I expect good wickets as we are seeing in the India New Zealand series and high scores, which gives great entertainment, but also puts pressure on both batters and bowlers as there is no time to rest.

South Africa have a very good squad and so a very good chance. But they are going to have to psychologically be prepared to post large scores and apply more pressure, chase high scores, particularly in the second phase of the tournament. I feel there is enough experience in the squad now to understand conditions and I expect the pitches to be prepared as good contests.

I do not think it is weakened with the injury replacements. Tristan Stubbs and Ryan Rickleton are experienced in the conditions and have just had very good SA20 competition. I feel it is a good squad as because it is not easy to identify members that have to have a good tournament. There is match-winning ability throughout the squad. Having said that I expect Quinton de Kock, Aiden Markram, Kagiso Rabada, Marco Jansen to be key players.

Marco Jansen and Corbin Bosch. Markram will do a job with the ball and his tactical batting has



grown tremendously over the last seasons. The SA20 is an excellent competition and it was really good preparation for the players. There were no easy matches and they will be battle hardened. Difficult to see beyond India. If they can be as successfully aggressive as they have been against New Zealand they are going to be very tough to beat. New Zealand, since they always seem to up their game at the ICC tournaments.

Yes the NZ series was good preparation. Their aggressive play sets a new benchmark.

## India bring that 2007 Aussie World Cup aura

### ■ UNITED NEWS OF INDIA



BRIDGETOWN: Since the end of the 2024 T20 World Cup, 11 Full-Member batters have 150-plus strike rates against both pace and spin in T20Is, with a minimum of 50 balls faced against both kinds of bowling. Four of the 11 are India batters.

That won't surprise anyone. India are world champions in this format, and they have, by common consensus, become an even more formidable team while building up to their title defence. One of their means of doing this has been a frightening powering-up with the bat. During this World Cup cycle, they've surpassed 250

three times. So have Zimbabwe, but they've done it against Seychelles, Gambia and Botswana. In all other Full-Member-versus-Full-Member T20I cricket in this period, there have only been two

other 250-plus totals.

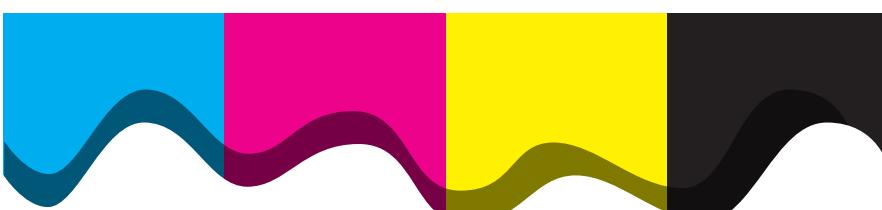
So yes, four India batters are in that list of 150-plus strike rates against both pace and spin. Big deal. Tell me something new.

Shivam Dube, whose per-

ceived shortcomings were, until recently, a far more frequent subject of discourse than his strengths. Suryakumar Yadav, who, during this World Cup cycle, has gone through the worst trough of his international career.

Yashav Jaiswal, a superstar-in-waiting who continues to wait because there's no room for him in India's top order. Or their T20 World Cup squad. You want to know how good India are, leading up to this tournament? Look at the numbers of their players who are either out of form or aren't guaranteed starters.

Take those of Sanju Samson during this cycle: 305 runs against spin at an average of 50.83 and a strike rate of 172.31, and if he's had issues against pace, it isn't the worst kind of struggle to be averaging 21.00 and striking at 146.15. Samson is in danger of losing his place in India's World Cup starting XI, but that's mostly because the guy he's competing with, Ishan Kishan, has recent numbers so absurd that he didn't make out 150/150 list only because he hasn't yet faced 50 balls of spin in this World Cup cycle. If we relaxed our qualification criteria to 40 balls against both kinds of bowling, Kishan would sit right on top of our list, with a strike rate of 215.68 against pace and 250.00 against spin.



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