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A money mule is a person who transfers or moves illegally acquired money on behalf of someone else.



## 'Agriculture First' Policy Key to Viksit Bharat, Aatma-Nirbhar J&K: LG Manoj Sinha

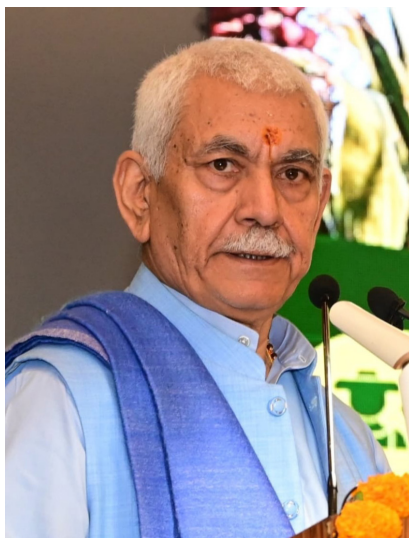
Inaugurates Three-Day Agriculture Summit & Kisan Mela at SKUAST-Jammu, Calls For AI-Driven, Farmer-Centric Reforms

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

**JAMMU, FEB 11:** Lieutenant Governor Shri Manoj Sinha on Wednesday asserted that the 'Agriculture First' policy is fundamental to building a Developed India and an Aatma-Nirbhar Jammu and Kashmir, stressing that agriculture and allied sectors remain the ultimate insurance policy for any developing society.

Inaugurating the three-day Agriculture Summit and Kisan Mela at SKUAST-Jammu, the Lieutenant Governor underlined the transformative potential of AI-powered advanced agriculture, calling for affordable, accessible, and high-impact technological solutions tailored to small and marginal farmers.

"Despite relentless challenges rang-



ing from climate change to economic uncertainty, agriculture and allied sectors will continue to keep us stable and our citizens prosperous," the LG said, highlighting the sector's vital role in ensuring national resilience, economic growth, and human welfare.

Delivering the keynote address, Shri Sinha directed officials, SKUAST scientists, and experts to deploy IoT sensors and satellite imagery to develop digital farm twins, enabling precision irrigation that can cut water usage by 50-60 percent. He further emphasized the development of farmer-centric AI tools to boost crop yields by 15-30 percent and reduce input costs by up to 50 percent, while providing real-time data on soil health, crop conditions, and nutrient

requirements.

The Lieutenant Governor also called for the establishment of village-level seed banks stocked with climate-resilient local varieties, promotion of circular farming models, and creation of district-level processing facilities to ensure value addition and direct market linkages for Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs).

"Strong agriculture means a strong nation. Technology creates opportunities, but agriculture creates survival. Together, they form the foundation of national resilience and prosperity," he remarked.

Addressing concerns surrounding recent trade agreements, the LG

● Turn on Page 2



A fresh landmark For Mendhar; The Newly Constructed Clock Tower (Ghanta Ghar) Standing Tall and Proud - HT Photo - MS NAZKI

## Indo-US Trade Pact Sparks Anxiety Among J&K Fruit Growers, Divides Opinion in Horticulture Sector

■ HT NEWS DESK / AGENCIES

**SRINAGAR, FEB 11:** The recently announced India-US interim trade deal has triggered deep concern among fruit growers and traders in Jammu and Kashmir, with fears mounting over its potential impact on the region's horticulture-driven economy. While a section of the

fraternity views the agreement as an opportunity to enhance quality and stabilize prices, the majority apprehend a severe blow to local producers.

Javid Ahmad Lone, a walnut grower and dealer from Shopian, believes that controlled competition could benefit farmers in the long run. He said imports of high-quality walnuts and almonds from the US would

compel local growers to improve their produce. "Protectionism breeds complacency. Competition will encourage farmers to enhance quality and bring stability in fluctuating prices," he said.

However, fruit growers' bodies strongly disagree. President of the Fruit Growers and Dealers Union, Bashir Ahmad

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## CM Omar Abdullah Vows Error-Free Land Records, Says Only Verified Data Will Be Digitised

Over 15,500 Land Record Errors Rectified; Govt Rules Out Haste, Prioritises Accuracy During Question Hour in Assembly

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

**JAMMU, FEB 11:** Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Tuesday assured the Legislative Assembly that the government would digitise only accurate and fully verified land records, asserting that there would be no haste in completing the process at the cost of correctness.



Intervening during the Question Hour, the Chief Minister acknowledged that the ongoing land record digitisation drive is not entirely error-free, with several complaints received from citizens regarding wrongly recorded or unregistered land ownership. "We are not in a race to complete the entire process within six months. What

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## J&K Assembly passes Rs 28,250.37 Cr grants for 4 Deptts

Sakeena appreciates CM, says Budget reflects strong commitment

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

**JAMMU, FEB 11:** The Legislative Assembly Wednesday passed the grants amounting to Rs. 12,98,872.13 Lakh for School Education department, Rs. 8,65,476.57 Lakh for Health and Medical Education department,

Rs. 4,45,671.59 Lakh for Social Welfare department and Rs. 2,15,016.37 Lakh for Higher Education department through voice vote.

The grants were passed after day long discussion by Members in the house.

Winding up the discussion on the

Demands for Grants, Minister for Health and Medical Education, Social Welfare and Education, Sakeena Itoo expressed gratitude to Legislators for their valuable suggestions and ideas regarding functioning of Departments under her charge.

She added that the way MLAs

highlighted the overall challenges in these sectors and their Constituency wise issues related to these sectors, will definitely guide Government in addressing any future challenges.

Minister Sakeena assured the Legislators that the departments

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## Over 12.36 Lakh Smart Meters Installed in J&K to Modernise Power Distribution

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

**JAMMU, FEB 11:** In a major push towards modernising the power distribution system and enhancing billing efficiency, the Jammu and Kashmir administration has installed over 12.36 lakh smart electricity meters across the Union Territory under central government schemes, the Legislative Assembly was informed on Wednesday.

The information was shared by the Power Development Department (PDD) in a written reply to a question raised by

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# District Admin Srinagar organises Mega Awareness-cum-Spot Registration Camp for Vay Vandana Cards at Kashmir Haat

DC Srinagar urges Senior Citizens to avail scheme benefits, calls for wider outreach to ensure 100% coverage

**HT NEWS NETWORK**

**SRINAGAR, FEB 11:** In a significant outreach initiative to ensure maximum coverage of eligible senior citizens aged 70 years and above under Ayushman Vay Vandana scheme providing additional health support, the District Administration Srinagar organized a mega Mega Awareness-cum-Spot Registration Camp at Kashmir Haat.

The Deputy Commissioner (DC) Srinagar, Akshay Labroo, presided over the awareness programme, which witnessed overwhelming participation from senior citizens across the district.

During the camp, several dedicated counters were set up by the Health Department and Common Service Centre (CSC) teams to facilitate on-the-spot registration and provide detailed information about the schemes ensuring hassle-free enrolment of all eligible beneficiaries.

Addressing the gathering, the Deputy Commissioner highlighted

ed the benefits of the Ayushman Vay Vandana card and urged senior citizens to avail maximum benefits under the scheme. He said the scheme provides comprehensive healthcare security to citizens aged 70 years and above, ensuring financial protection against medical expenses.

The DC stated that the objective of such public awareness camps is to ensure that the benefits of the scheme reach every eligible beneficiary so that they can avail assistance in times of medical need.

While lauding the District Health machinery, District Treasuries, CSC teams and field functionaries for successfully organizing the camp, the DC emphasized the need for wider outreach. He directed that similar Awareness-cum-Spot Registration Camps be organized in all Medical Zones and Blocks of the district to expand the ambit and coverage of the scheme.

He also urged participants to spread awareness about the ben-



efits of the Vay Vandana Scheme so that every eligible individual is enrolled and can utilize the Vay Vandana card during emergencies.

During the camp, the DC also handed over Ayushman Vay Vandana cards to the senior citizens of the district.

The eligible residents of District Srinagar who wish to register under the Ayushman Vay Vandana Scheme may contact 8825048995, 9596900893 or 7006283138 to complete their registration and avail the benefits of the scheme.

Additional Deputy Commissioner Srinagar, Mir Imtiyaz Ul Aziz; Joint Commissioner SMC, Nuzhat Khurshid; Chief Planning Officer, Fayaz Ahmad Dar; Chief Medical officer, Dr Tahir Sajad; Block Medical Officer, Hazratbal, Dr Abdul Majeed; Zonal Medical Officer, Batamaloo, and other senior Health functionaries and officers of District Administration were present in the camp.

## Union Budget 2026 is a roadmap for youth-led development: Ashok Koul

Yuva Sammelan on Union Budget 2026 held in Srinagar

**HT NEWS NETWORK**

**SRINAGAR, FEB 11:** A Yuva Sammelan focusing on the Union Budget 2026 was organized by the Jammu & Kashmir BJP at Rajbhag Hotel Green Ambition, Srinagar.

J&K BJP General Secretary (Organization) Ashok Koul was the chief speaker on the occasion. He was accompanied by BJYM President Arun Prabhat, District President Adv. Sheikh Salman, J&K BJP Spokespersons Sahil Bashir and Manzoor Bhat, along with other senior leaders.

The Sammelan witnessed enthusiastic participation from youth, students, entrepreneurs, and party workers, reflecting the growing interest of young people in national economic policies and



development initiatives.

Addressing the youth, Ashok Koul said that the Union Budget 2026 is a forward-looking and youth-centric budget that lays a strong foundation for employment generation, innovation, and inclusive growth. He highlighted that the budget places special emphasis on youth empowerment and startups, strengthening India's rapidly growing startup ecosystem. He noted with pride that India now ranks 3rd globally in the startup ecosystem, which reflects the visionary leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Koul further stated that the budget promotes Atmanirbhar Bharat, encouraging youth to become job providers rather than job seekers. He added that enhanced focus on skill development, innovation, MSMEs, digital economy, and new-age sectors will open vast employment opportunities for young Indians. He also underlined provisions aimed at women empowerment, ensuring greater financial independence and social strength for women.

Arun Prabhat, speaking on the occasion, said that the Union Budget 2026 has created new hope for the youth by supporting startups, skilling programs, and entrepreneurship. He asserted that the budget motivates young people to actively participate in nation-building and take advantage of emerging opportunities.

District President Adv. Sheikh Salman, while concluding the Sammelan, expressed gratitude to all senior leaders, speakers, and participants for making the event successful. He thanked the youth for their active involvement and reaffirmed BJP's commitment to empowering the younger generation of Jammu & Kashmir.

## CS emphasizes on outreach and training for effective Labour Code implementation

**HT NEWS NETWORK**

**JAMMU, FEB 11:** Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo, today chaired a high-level meeting of the Labour & Employment Department to review the implementation status of the four new Labour Codes—one of the most significant labour reforms undertaken in the country to simplify compliance mechanisms and strengthen worker welfare.

The meeting was attended by Secretary, Labour & Employment, Kumar Rajeev Ranjan; Labour Commissioner; and other senior officers of the department.

Reviewing the progress made so far, the Chief Secretary underscored the importance of launching a sustained and structured awareness campaign to ensure comprehensive understanding of the new Labour Codes among all stakeholders, including employers, employees, trade unions and industrial establishments. He emphasized that widespread awareness is essential for ensuring smooth compliance and effective implementation of these landmark reforms.

He further called for focused capacity-building initiatives for all concerned stakeholders to facilitate seamless transition to the new legal framework. He observed that the true objective of these reforms lies not merely in their notification, but in their effective on-ground implementation, leading to tangible improvements in ease of doing business, enhanced compliance, and strengthened social security and welfare mechanisms for workers across establishments covered under these laws.

Highlighting the department's efforts, Secretary, Labour & Employment, Kumar Rajeev Ranjan informed the meeting that the department has so far conducted 194 awareness generation camps across J&K, reaching out to 1,046 establishments and sensitizing 14,205 participants.

He stated that the department is further intensifying its outreach strategy through outdoor publicity campaigns, social media platforms and FM Radio broadcasts to maximize public engagement and dissemination of information regarding the provisions of the new Labour Codes.

The Secretary also apprised the meeting that a comprehensive capacity-building programme is being formulated in collaboration with judicial bodies, the J&K Institute of Management, Public Administration & Rural Development (IMPARD), and other reputed national-level institutions. These initiatives aim to equip enforcement officers, employers, and other stakeholders with the requisite knowledge and skills for smooth and uniform implementation of the Codes across the Union Territory.

It is to be noted that the four Labour Codes have subsumed 44 existing Central labour laws into a consolidated and modern regulatory framework, thereby rationalizing the legal structure, reducing multiplicity of compliances, and promoting transparency, accountability, and worker welfare.

## INFRASTRUCTURE FOR 200 E-BUSES UNDERWAY IN JAMMU & SRINAGAR

CS Reviews Implementation of PM eBus Sewa

**HT NEWS NETWORK**

**JAMMU, FEB 11:** Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo, today chaired a meeting of the UT-Level Steering Committee to review the implementation of the PM eBus Sewa Scheme in Jammu & Kashmir, under which 200 electric buses are being procured to strengthen and modernize urban public transport across the Union Territory.

The meeting was attended by Additional Chief Secretary, Agriculture Production Department; Commissioner Secretary, Housing & Urban Development Department (H&UDD); Secretary, Transport; Director General, Codes; Commissioner, Jammu Municipal Corporation (JMC); Commissioner, Srinagar Municipal Corporation (SMC); Chief Engineers of JPDCL and KPDC; and other senior officers concerned.

While reviewing the progress achieved so far, the Chief Secretary emphasized the need for expeditious development of supporting infrastructure to ensure seamless operationalization of the e-buses.

He directed the Special Purpose Vehicles (SPVs) of Jammu Smart City Limited (JSCL) and Srinagar Smart City Limited (SSCL) to prioritize the establishment of Behind-the-Meter

(BTM) power infrastructure, civil depot infrastructure, and other requisite facilities essential for efficient functioning of the fleet.

Stressing adherence to timelines, the Chief Secretary asked the concerned agencies to complete the tendering processes after carefully examining prevailing national trends and best practices. He further directed that all necessary arrangements be put in place so that the buses are pressed into service immediately upon their receipt, ensuring timely benefits to the public.

Commissioner Secretary, H&UDD, Mandeep Kaur, briefed the Committee about the scheme's implementation framework in the UT. She informed that 100 e-buses each will be procured by Srinagar Smart City Limited and Jammu Smart City Limited under the PM eBus Sewa Scheme.

Providing details of the fleet composition, she stated that JSCL will procure 25 buses of 12-metre length and 75 buses of 7-metre length, while SSCL will procure 20 buses of 12-metre length and 80 buses of 9-metre length, catering to the operational requirements of both cities.

Commissioner, JMC, Devansh Yadav, further elaborated on the progress made under the scheme. He

informed that the Detailed Project Reports (DPRs) for Civil Depot Infrastructure (CDI) and Behind-the-Meter (BTM) Power Infrastructure for both Jammu and Srinagar have been approved in accordance with the guidelines of the PM eBus Sewa Scheme. Tenders for these works have already been issued by JSCL and SSCL respectively.

It was further informed that the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) has issued the Mother Sanction amounting to ₹14.28 crore for the Behind-the-Meter power infrastructure and the first tranche of ₹14.05 crore for Civil Infrastructure through SNA-SPARSH, facilitating timely execution of the project components.

The meeting was apprised that the PM eBus Sewa Scheme, instituted by MoHUA, is a flagship national programme aimed at large-scale electrification of urban public transport systems across the country. Convergence Energy Services Limited (CESL) has been appointed by MoHUA as the Implementation Support Agency for aggregated procurement and contracting under the scheme, ensuring efficiency, transparency, and cost optimization.

## Dignified Ceremony Marks 47th Anniversary of Iranian Islamic Revolution in Mirgund

Islamic Revolution is a prelude to reappearance; there is no room for retreat

**HT NEWS NETWORK**

**BUDGAM, FEB 11:** On the occasion of the 47th anniversary of the Iranian Islamic Revolution, Jammu and Kashmir Anjuman-e-Shariah Shian organized a dignified and well-attended commemorative programme at Mehboob-e-Millat Hall, Howzia Ilmiya Jamia Bab-ul-Ilm. The event witnessed the participation of prominent religious scholars, preachers, teachers, alumni of the seminary, students of Maktab-e-Zahra Hasan Abad, and a large number of students from Jamia Bab-ul-Ilm Mirgund.

The speakers paid rich tributes to the historic Islamic Revolution of Iran and highlighted the visionary leadership of its founder, Imam Ruhollah Khomeini (RA). They discussed various ideological, political, and spiritual dimensions of the revolution and its lasting global impact.

Those who addressed the gathering included President of

Anjuman-e-Shariah Shian, Hujjat-ul-Islam wal-Muslimeen Agha Syed Hassan al-Mousavi al-Safavi, along with Hujjat-ul-Islam Syed Muhammad Hussain Mousavi, Syed Yusuf Mousavi, Syed Muhammad Hussain Safavi, Molvi Mehboob-ul-Hassan, Ghulam Ahmad Sheikh, Nisar Hussain Walo, Syed Arshad Mousavi, Ghulam Muhammad Gulzar, Molvi Gohar Hussain, Syed Ali, and Tanveer Hussain.

The speakers unanimously asserted that today's Iran is not the Iran envisioned by the United States and the Zionist Israeli regime as weak or submissive. Despite severe sanctions, political pressure, economic warfare, and media propaganda, the Islamic Republic of Iran has achieved remarkable progress and resilience. They stated that these achievements prove that leadership rooted in Qur'anic values, Wilayat-based guidance, and popular support cannot be defeated by global arrogance.



In his presidential address, Agha Syed Hassan al-Mousavi al-Safavi said that the farsighted leadership of the Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution has not only safeguarded Iran but has also strengthened the axis of resistance across the region. He noted that the expanding resistance from Gaza to Yemen and from Lebanon to Iraq demonstrates that the ideology of the

Islamic Revolution transcends geographical boundaries.

He further stated that Iran has emerged as an undeniable reality in the fields of scientific advancement, defensive self-reliance, and ideological steadfastness. The repeated failures of the United States and the growing frustration of the Zionist regime, he added, are evidence that resistance ensures dignity and success,

not submission.

The gathering reaffirmed that the Islamic Revolution is not confined to ceremonies or anniversaries but represents a continuous struggle and a living movement, serving as a prelude to the reappearance of Imam al-Mahdi (AJ). The speakers emphasized that the world today stands divided between oppression and resistance, leaving no room for neutrality or silence.

On the occasion, Anjuman-e-Shariah Shian reiterated its complete confidence in the leadership of the Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution and renewed its ideological and moral commitment to the Islamic Republic of Iran.

The programme concluded with prayers and the hope that the Islamic Revolution will continue its journey of success, ultimately leading to the establishment of divine justice and the defeat of oppression and global arrogance.





## DLFTC approves 31 Applications under JKREGP in Budgam

DC stresses timely processing, rural industrialization & youth empowerment in the District

### HT NEWS NETWORK

**BUDGAM, FEBRUARY 11:** A meeting of the District Level Task Force Committee (DLFTC) under the Jammu and Kashmir Rural Employment Generation Programme (JKREGP) was today convened at Budgam under the chairmanship of the Deputy Commissioner(DC) Budgam Dr. Bilal Mohi-ud-Din Bhat.

The meeting was attended by the General Manager, DIC Budgam; Lead District Manager Budgam, Executive Officer J&K KVIB Budgam; Principal ITI Budgam, and representatives from State Bank of India and J&K State Co-operative Bank Budgam.

During the meeting, the committee held threadbare discussions and examined loan applications sponsored through the J&K Khadi and Village Industries Board (KVIB) for the establishment of micro and small enterprises in the district.

Out of a total of 46 applications placed before the committee, 31 projects were recommended and approved for bank financing. The approved projects cover a variety of sectors, including manufacturing, services, and agro-based industries.



Once established, these ventures are expected to create direct employment opportunities for youth in rural and semi-urban areas of Budgam.

Speaking on the occasion, the DC emphasized that the JKREGP

scheme is crucial in providing vital financial assistance to aspiring entrepreneurs, enabling them to establish their own business units.

He said, "By approving these projects, we are promoting self-reliance, rural industrialization,

and sustainable employment generation in Budgam. Youth should take maximum advantage of such schemes to become job providers rather than job seekers."

The DC issued directions to all concerned officers and bankers

present to ensure time-bound processing of the approved cases, hassle-free loan sanctioning, and prompt subsidy disbursement to the beneficiaries. He also directed the KVIB to handhold entrepreneurs at every stage from project formulation to execution so that approved units are established on ground without delay.

The representatives of banks were directed to ensure full cooperation in early sanction and disbursement of loan assistance to the beneficiaries. The DC directed the banks to adopt a pro-active approach in financing rural entrepreneurs so that the employment generation potential of the schemes is fully realized.

The DC further said that District administration Budgam is committed towards making the district a hub of rural entrepreneurship and self-employment by harnessing the potential of youth and supporting them under flagship livelihood generation schemes.

Meanwhile, applicants whose projects have been approved are advised to approach their respective financing banks immediately for completion of the necessary formalities.

## DC Bandipora reviews Ramadan arrangements; Stresses uninterrupted essential services

### HT NEWS NETWORK

**BANDIPORA, FEBRUARY 11:** In view of the ensuing holy month of Ramadan, Deputy Commissioner (DC) Bandipora, Indu Kanwal Chib, today chaired a meeting of concerned officers to review and finalise necessary arrangements across the district.

On the occasion, the DC emphasised coordinated efforts among all departments to ensure uninterrupted essential services, availability of quality food items, and effective market regulation during the holy month.

The Assistant Director, FCS&CA, informed the meeting that sufficient stocks of essential commodities are available across the district. The DC directed the Power Development Department (PDD) to maintain a transparent power schedule and prepare a detailed 30-day roster indicating day-wise, hour-wise and feeder-wise supply, besides furnishing details of the existing supply and any additional requirements.



Highlighting the importance of public health and hygiene, the DC directed the Food Safety Department to constitute dedicated teams for regular market inspections to prevent the sale of substandard food items and check price escalation. The Public Health Engineering (PHE) Department informed that all water supply schemes are functional. Fire and Emergency Services were directed to remain on alert during the holy month. The Sheep Husbandry Department also reported adequate availability of livestock.

During the meeting, the DC directed the Municipal Committee to intensify sanitation drives, ensure proper waste management, and conduct a survey to identify areas requiring additional street lighting. The DC also reviewed arrangements for essential supplies in Gurez, and was informed that adequate stocks are available.

The Deputy Commissioner stressed strict monitoring of markets to prevent overpricing, hoarding and sale of substandard material, and urged all departments to work in close coordination to facilitate smooth observance of Ramadan for the people of Bandipora.

The meeting was attended by Assistant Commissioner Revenue Bandipora, Shabir Ahmad Wani; Assistant Commissioner Development; Assistant Director, FCS&CA; ARTO Bandipora; DIO Bandipora; and officers from PDD, PHE, Municipal Committee, Fire and Emergency Services and other concerned departments.

## World Unani Day celebrated at Government Dental College, Srinagar

### HT NEWS NETWORK

**SRINAGAR, FEBRUARY 11:** World Unani Day was celebrated with great enthusiasm and academic significance at Government Dental College, Srinagar, under the theme "Innovation and Evidence in Unani Practice."

The event commemorated the birth anniversary of the eminent Unani physician, educationist, and freedom fighter Hakim Ajmal Khan, whose vision continues to guide the advancement of the Unani system of medicine in India.

Prof. Shakil Ahmad Romshoo, Vice Chancellor, Islamic University of Science & Technology (IUST), graced the occasion as the Chief Guest. Prof. (Dr.) Iffat Ahmad Shah, Principal, Government Unani Medical College Ganderbal; Prof. Dr. Sandeep Kour Bali Principal, Government Dental College Srinagar; Prof. (Dr.) Shabir Ahmad Shah, MS Govt Dental College Srinagar; Dr. Showkat Hussain Ittoo, Registrar, Board of Ayurveda and Unani System of Medicine; Dr. Sujad Hussain Shuja, Assistant Director, Directorate of AYUSH, J&K also Participated in the program. In his address, the Vice Chancellor paid rich tributes to Hakim Ajmal Khan, describing him as a reformer who institutionalized Unani education and emphasized scientific temper in traditional medicine. He stated that the theme of this year, "Innovation and Evidence in Unani Practice" resonates deeply with Hakim Ajmal Khan's vision of combining classical wisdom with modern research methodologies. He further informed the gathering that IUST has established a dedicated Unani Cell to promote advanced research in Unani medicine, and that the University has initiated Postgraduate and Ph.D. programmes in the Unani system, thereby creating a robust academic and research ecosystem for the discipline in Jammu & Kashmir. Prof. (Dr.) Iffat Ahmad Shah, in her address, highlighted the monumental role of Hakim Ajmal Khan in strengthening medical education and public health institutions in India. He emphasized that innovation in Unani practice must be rooted in authentic classical knowledge while being supported by scientific validation and interdisciplinary collaboration. The Keynote Address on the theme was delivered by Dr. Sujad Hussain Shuja, Assistant Director, Directorate of AYUSH, J&K, who spoke extensively about translating the legacy of Hakim Ajmal Khan into contemporary action through clinical documentation, pharmacological research, drug standardization, and integration of innovation with evidence-based practice. He highlighted the recent achievements of the Directorate of AYUSH, J&K, in expanding AYUSH healthcare services, strengthening academic institutions, and promoting research initiatives across the Union Territory.

The programme commenced with a welcome address by Dr. Mushtaq Payer, District Ayush Officer Srinagar, who described Hakim Ajmal Khan as a symbol of intellectual excellence and national service, whose contributions laid the foundation for modern Unani institutional frameworks in India.

The event also featured an impressive poster presentation session by students from various Unani colleges of Kashmir, showcasing innovative research concepts and evidence-based clinical perspectives aligned with the theme.

The function witnessed participation from District Officers AYUSH of Kashmir Division, Medical Officers (Unani), research scholars, faculty members, and students, reflecting strong academic engagement within the Unani fraternity.

The celebration reaffirmed the collective resolve to carry forward the visionary legacy of Hakim Ajmal Khan by strengthening innovation, research, and evidence-based advancement of the Unani system of medicine in Jammu & Kashmir.

## Mission YUVA: Training Program For YUVA DOOTS Held at Anantnag

### HT NEWS NETWORK

**ANANTNAG, FEBRUARY 11:** To accelerate on-ground implementation and strengthen district-level monitoring under Mission YUVA, a day-long training programme for YUVA DOOTS was held by the District Employment & Counselling Centre (DE&CC), Anantnag today at Khanabal. With special focus on operational components of Mission YUVA, the program was organised under the supervision of Career Counselling Officer, Shazlia Qureshi and Employment Officer, Rayees Iqbal. The first session highlighted the need for mobilisation of applications, encouraging women entrepreneurs and SHG-based enterprises, along with targeted outreach in low-performing blocks and urban wards.

Credit linkage and pendency management through systematic follow-up of pending cases, coordination with banking institutions, and proper tracking mechanisms for timely disposal



featured in the second session.

Under the "Beyond Sanctions" campaign, the importance of sustainability and support of beneficiaries through capacity building, output monitoring, and effective grievance redressal were discussed. Seller onboarding in urban centres, facilitating beneficiary registration on ONDC and other e-commerce

platforms to enhance market access and sales potential were elaborated in detail.

To support structured field execution, training material was shared with the district teams and they were advised to adhere to timelines and ensure coordinated implementation of the flagship Mission YUVA initiative.

## DC Budgam reviews implementation Framework of Gyan Bharatam Mission

Emphasises preservation of Manuscript Heritage in the District

### HT NEWS NETWORK

**BUDGAM, FEBRUARY 11:** Deputy Commissioner (DC) Budgam, Dr. Bilal Mohi-ud-din Bhat, today presided over a review meeting at the Conference Hall, DC Office Complex, to discuss and finalise the implementation and coordination framework for the recently restructured Gyan Bharatam Mission, which aims at the preservation, documentation and digitisation of India's invaluable manuscript heritage.

The meeting was attended by the General Manager DIC Budgam (designated Nodal Officer for the Mission), Chief Executive Officer, Tehsildars, Block Development Officers (BDOs), and other concerned district and field-level officers.

During the meeting, the DC highlighted that the Gyan Bharatam Mission has been launched with the objective of safeguarding the

nation's rich intellectual and cultural legacy.

The DC emphasised that systematic efforts are required to ensure that manuscripts of historical, cultural and academic significance are properly identified, documented and preserved in a scientific manner.

The DC stressed that comprehensive surveys are required to be conducted across the district to identify manuscripts available in private collections, religious institutions, shrines, monasteries, madrasas, temples, gurudwaras, libraries and other heritage establishments. He underlined that due importance must be given to manuscripts held by individuals and families, which often remain undocumented.

The DC further emphasised on ensuring that digitisation is carried out in a structured and standardised manner so that valuable manuscripts are protected from



physical deterioration and made accessible through a national digital repository. The importance of scientific conservation techniques for long-term preservation was also highlighted.

The DC directed that all Tehsildars and Block Development Officers shall ensure effective coordination at the grassroots level to facilitate identification, documentation and reporting of manuscripts.

He stressed that field officers are required to play a proactive

role in mobilising community participation and creating public awareness regarding the importance of preserving manuscript heritage.

The DC underscored that awareness must be generated among the public regarding manuscripts that are more than seventy-five years old, in accordance with the provisions of the Antiquities and Art Treasures Act, 1972, so that such heritage assets are duly protected and brought under the institutional preservation framework.

The DC also emphasised that capacity building of concerned staff and stakeholders shall be ensured to strengthen implementation, and that public outreach initiatives shall be intensified to encourage voluntary disclosure and documentation of manuscripts.

The General Manager, briefed the chair about the objectives and

components of the mission, including large-scale digitisation, creation of a national digital repository, institutional strengthening, capacity building, and extensive public outreach activities.

Reiterating the importance of inter-departmental convergence, the DC stated that coordinated and sustained efforts of all concerned departments are essential to achieve the targets laid down under the mission.

The DC stressed that the initiative must be implemented in a mission-mode approach so that the cultural and intellectual heritage of the district is preserved in a systematic, transparent and time-bound manner for future generations. He directed for the effective implementation of the Gyan Bharatam Mission across Budgam district through close monitoring, regular reviews and strengthened field-coordination.

## Govt College of Education Srinagar secures NCTE Recognition for 4-Year ITEP Programmes

### HT NEWS NETWORK

**SRINAGAR, FEBRUARY 11:** Govt. College of Education (IASE), M.A. Road, Srinagar, has achieved a significant academic milestone with the National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE), the statutory body regulating Teacher Education programmes in the country granting recognition to the 4 year Integrated B.A.-B.Ed. and B.Sc.-B.Ed. Programmes for the secondary stage, the only institution in the UT of J&K to offer B.Sc.-B.Ed.

The recognition of the Integrated Teacher Education Programmes (ITEP) by NCTE represents a major step forward in aligning

the institution with the vision and objectives of the National Education Policy 2020, and marks a significant academic milestone for the institution, reaffirms its unwavering commitment to excellence, quality assurance and national benchmarks in Teacher Education. ITEP is a 4 year Dual Major Bachelor's Degree that allows students to earn two qualifications in 4 years resulting in B.A.-B.Ed (Bachelors of Arts & B.Ed) and B.Sc.-B.Ed (Bachelor of Science & B.Ed).

The College management has further informed that the college from this academic session will start Ph.D in Education alongside with FYUG 4th year Research Vertical recognized by the Cluster University, Srinagar.

## District Admin Bandipora holds IEC Awareness Programme under NMBA at SDH Sumbal

### HT NEWS NETWORK

**BANDIPORA, FEBRUARY 11:** As part of the ongoing Nasha Mukht Bharat Abhiyaan (NMBA), the District Administration Bandipora today organized an IEC awareness programme at Sub-District Hospital Sumbal to educate the public about the harmful effects of drug abuse and to encourage a healthy, substance-free lifestyle. The programme witnessed active participation from members of the public and was attended by officials from the Department of Health; Social Welfare, ARTO, RDD, and Youth Services & Sports. The initiative aimed to strengthen

awareness at the grassroots level and promote collective responsibility in addressing the issue of substance abuse. Resource persons delivered informative sessions highlighting the physical, psychological, and social consequences of drug addiction. The speakers stressed the importance of early awareness, community involvement, and informed decision-making among youth and society at large. Participants actively engaged in interactive discussions and shared their views during the session. The programme concluded with a renewed commitment to continue such awareness initiatives to build a safer, healthier, and drug-free society.







# District Kulgam conducts Training Programme for YUVA Doots to accelerate implementation of Mission YUVA

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

**KULGAM, FEBRUARY 11:** District Administration Kulgam today organised a one-day training programme for YUVA Doots and newly engaged Motivators at Mini-Secretariat, Kulgam, with the objective of strengthening the implementation of Mission YUVA at the grassroots level in the district.

The programme was presided over by the Additional District Development Commissioner (ADDC) Kulgam, Altaf Ahmad Khan and attended by officers, officials from Employment Department, SBDU and BHD's.

Held in accordance with the approved strategy for "YUVA Doots Training for Accelerated Progress under Mission YUVA", the programme aimed to ensure clarity of roles among field functionaries,



promote uniform implementation across blocks and wards, enhance application mobilisation, strengthen credit follow-up mechanisms, improve post-sanction support, and reinforce market linkages through seller onboarding.

Addressing the YUVA Doots and Motivators, ADDC Kulgam highlighted the role of field functionaries in achieving the objectives of Mission YUVA and stressed the importance of systematic outreach, coordinated follow-up and focused implementation to ensure effective outcomes at the grassroots level.

The sessions were structured around four thematic areas viz. mobilisation of applications with special focus on SHG women and low-performing areas; credit follow-up on pending applications with banks; Beyond Sanctions

Campaign focusing on post-sanction support, capacity building and output tracking, and seller onboarding in urban centres for market linkage through ONDC.

Resource persons including Career Counselling Officer and Employment Officer, DE&CC Kulgam deliberated on the strategies to strengthen outreach at the Panchayat level, ensure timely resolution of pending cases with banks, facilitate beneficiary training and systematic output tracking in high-sanction areas, and identify and onboard urban sellers to strengthen market linkages under the mission.

The programme concluded with an interactive session during which field-level issues were discussed and necessary guidance was provided to ensure effective and timely discharge of responsibilities.

## World Unani Day 2026 celebrated at Women's Degree College Baramulla

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

**BARAMULLA, FEBRUARY 11:** World Unani Day 2026 was celebrated with great enthusiasm and academic fervour at Women's Degree College, Baramulla.

The programme was inaugurated by Deputy Commissioner Baramulla, Minga Sherpa.

The event was organized to commemorate the rich legacy and contemporary relevance of the Unani system of medicine. This year's theme, "Evidence Based & Innovations in Unani Medicine," underscored the importance of scientific



validation, research integration, and technological advancements in strengthening the classical foundations of Unani medicine.

The theme highlighted the need to bridge traditional wisdom with modern scientific methodologies to enhance global acceptance and expand its impact in the healthcare sector.

Addressing the gathering, the Deputy Commissioner emphasized the significance of promoting traditional systems of medicine alongside modern healthcare practices. He appreciated the efforts of the organizers in creating awareness about the scientific and research-oriented dimensions of Unani medicine. He stressed that evidence-based approaches and innovation are essential to ensuring credibility, wider recognition, and integration of Unani medicine into mainstream healthcare.

Encouraging students, he urged them to actively engage in research and skill development so as to contribute meaningfully to the evolving healthcare landscape.

A scientific session formed a key highlight of the programme, featuring insightful lectures and presentations by experts in the field. The deliberations focused on recent research developments, clinical evidence, innovative therapeutic approaches, and the future prospects of Unani medicine within integrative healthcare frameworks. Students and faculty members participated actively, making the session intellectually enriching and inspiring.

The programme concluded with a felicitation ceremony to honour distinguished guests, experts, and contributors for their valuable participation and support in making the event a success.

## Mission Vatsalya Bandipora organises Child Marriage-Free Bharat awareness program at Athwattoo

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

**BANDIPORA, FEBRUARY 11 :** As part of the ongoing Child Marriage Free Bharat Campaign, Mission Vatsalya Bandipora, organized a Bal Vivah Mukht Bharat awareness programme at Athwattoo, Bandipora.

The programme aimed to sensitize community members about the harmful physical, emotional, and social consequences of child marriage, as well as to highlight the legal provisions under the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006. Ex Sarpanchs, Ex ward



members, ASHA workers, Anganwadi workers, Lumberdars, along with local community representatives, actively participated in the event.

Officials from DCPU, CWC, CHL and CHD educated attendees about the long-term negative impact of child marriage on education, health, and future opportunities, especially for young girls.

Participants were also informed about mechanisms to report child marriage cases, emphasizing the importance of timely intervention. The Child Helpline number 1098 was promoted as a 24/7 confidential reporting platform, enabling citizens to report cases and seek support for children at risk.

A resolution was passed during the programme, reaffirming the community's commitment to prevent child marriage and to protect the Child Rights. Stakeholders pledged to remain vigilant, spread awareness, and support legal action against violations.

Officials reiterated that community involvement is crucial in eradicating child marriage and encouraged citizens to report suspected cases immediately to ensure timely protection and justice.

The event concluded with a strong message that every child deserves the right to education, safety, and a dignified future free from early marriage.

## World Unani Day Celebrated at Kulgam

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

**KULGAM, FEBRUARY 11:** A day long seminar-cum-awareness programme was today organized by the AYUSH Department Kulgam at the Conference Hall, Mini Secretariat, to mark World Unani Day.

The programme was inaugurated by Deputy Commissioner (DC) Kulgam, Athar Aamir Khan.

On the occasion, the DC appreciated the efforts of the AYUSH Department Kulgam in promoting traditional systems of healthcare and urged the department to further strengthen its services across the district.

He also complimented the department for achieving NABH accreditation for several Ayushman Arogya Mandirs.

During the programme, speakers and experts from the AYUSH Department highlighted the objectives and historical significance of World Unani Day and said that the day is observed on the birth anniversary of renowned scholar Hakim Ajmal Khan,



who made significant contributions to the development and promotion of the Unani system of medicine.

District Nodal Officer AYUSH also presented the achievements and ongoing initiatives of the AYUSH

Department in Kulgam.

Later, doctors, paramedics, and former staff members were felicitated for their dedicated service and valuable contributions to the AYUSH sector in the district.

## DC Budgam chairs MDDLTFC meeting to strengthen monitoring of mineral extraction and transportation

### Strict enforcement measures approved to curb illegal mining

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

**BUDGAM, FEBRUARY 11:** A meeting of the Multi-Departmental District Level Task Force Cell (MDDLTFC) was today convened under the chairmanship of the Deputy Commissioner (DC) Budgam Dr. Bilal Mohi-ud-din Bhat, to review, assess and further strengthen the regulatory and monitoring mechanisms for mineral extraction and transportation in the district.

During the meeting, a comprehensive review of the prevailing enforcement framework was undertaken and the functioning of various departments involved in mineral regulation was critically assessed. The DC emphasised the need for enhanced inter-departmental coordination, real-time monitoring, and strict adherence to statutory provisions to ensure transparency, accountability and effective control over mineral-related activities.

He stressed that illegal mining

and unauthorized transportation of minerals shall not be tolerated, and that a zero-tolerance policy shall be adopted against violators.

The DC underscored that robust technological interventions, coupled with field-level enforcement, shall be ensured to strengthen oversight and prevent revenue leakage.

In the meeting, District Mineral Officer (DMO), Budgam, was directed to ensure strict enforcement of installation of AIS-140 compliant GPS/RFID devices on all machinery used for mineral extraction and on all tippers, dumpers and other vehicles engaged in mineral transportation. This process shall be carried out in close coordination with the ARTO Budgam and District Police. It was directed that strict legal action shall be initiated against all defaulters and violators to ensure full compliance. The DC further directed DMO to establish a dedicated Control Room in his office for real-time monitoring of



GPS and RFID-enabled vehicles. He further said that the Control Room shall serve as a centralized monitoring hub to track movement of mineral-loaded vehicles and detect any deviations or irregularities. DySP Hq Budgam was directed to identify additional

hotspot locations, apart from the eight locations already submitted by the DMO Budgam, for installation of Automatic Plate Number Recognition (APNR) cameras. These cameras shall be installed at strategic locations to enhance surveillance and enable automatic

detection of unauthorized and illegal mineral transportation.

ARTO Budgam was directed to initiate strict action against unregistered tippers, machinery and other vehicles found to be involved in mineral extraction and transportation. The DC stressed that only duly registered and compliant vehicles shall be allowed to operate, and that enforcement drives shall be intensified to curb illegal operations.

The Deputy Commissioner directed all concerned departments to ensure time-bound implementation of the decisions taken and to submit regular progress reports. It was further emphasized that coordinated enforcement drives shall be conducted and accountability shall be fixed in case of lapses.

The meeting was attended by Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC), DySP HQ, Divisional Forest Officer (DFO), Executive Engineer, I&FC, District Mineral Officer (DMO) and other concerned officials.

## World Unani Day observed at Shopian

### AYUSH Deptt promotes traditional healthcare practices

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

**SHOPIAN, FEBRUARY 11:** Department of AYUSH, Shopian in collaboration with Information Department, Shopian today organised World Unani Day at Mini-Secretariat Shopian to commemorate the invaluable contributions of the Unani system of medicine to holistic and preventive healthcare.

ADDC, Shopian, Dr. Nasir Ahmed Lone attended the programme as Chief Guest, highlighted the historical significance of Unani Medicine and its continued relevance

in addressing lifestyle-related disorders through natural and evidence-based treatments.

Addressing the gathering, he stressed the need to create mass awareness about the benefits of Unani Medicine, including its focus on balance of temperament, use of natural formulations and emphasis on disease prevention. He also underscored the role of AYUSH systems in complementing modern medicine and strengthening public healthcare delivery.

District Ayush Officer, Shopian, Dr. Javid Ahmed briefed the gathering

on the principles of Unani medicine and underlined the importance of pure water, clean air and balanced nutrition for overall well-being.

The programme was organised in line with the theme "Innovation and Evidence in Unani Practice", focussing on scientific validation, quality assurance and innovation in Unani System of medicine.

Experts and doctors emphasized the role of Unani Medicine in preventive healthcare and its growing acceptance through evidence-based practices. Awareness was generated about the therapeutic

benefits of Unani Medicine and its contribution to holistic well-being.

The event concluded with a call to strengthen coordination among departments for wider outreach and promotion of Ayush systems for public health benefit. A skit Kashmiri "Aalow" was presented by District Information Centre, Shopian for adopting traditional healthcare systems for overall well-being and the participants were encouraged to make informed choices regarding healthcare and to utilize AYUSH services available at Ayush health institutions.

## Safer Internet Day celebrated at Ganderbal

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

**GANDERBAL, FEBRUARY 11:** In connection with the 'Safer Internet Day', observed worldwide on the second Tuesday of February, an awareness event was held at the Conference Hall, Ganderbal organized by the National Informatics Centre (NIC), Ganderbal under the theme "Smart Tech, Safe Choices." Addressing the event, District Informatics Officer (DIO), Ganderbal highlighted the growing challenges of cyber threats and the importance of cyber awareness in today's digital age.

On the occasion, participants were sensitized on basic cyber safety measures, including the use of strong long alphanumeric passwords, avoiding clicking on suspicious



links, and staying alert to emerging threats such as deepfake technology.

The session emphasized responsible and informed use of the internet to prevent cyber fraud and misinformation.

The programme concluded with a call for collective responsibility to ensure a safer and more secure digital environment.





HT EDITORIAL

## Driving Srinagar Towards a Greener, Smarter Way to Commute

The Induction of 200 electric buses under the PM eBus Sewa Scheme marks a transformative moment for Srinagar's public transport landscape and signals Jammu and Kashmir's growing commitment to sustainable urban development. At a time when Indian cities are battling traffic congestion, rising pollution and overstretched transport systems, this initiative offers Srinagar a timely opportunity to build a modern, clean and citizen-friendly mobility network.

Public transport forms the backbone of any vibrant urban economy. For Srinagar a city that must cater to both a growing resident population and heavy tourist inflows — dependable, efficient and eco-friendly transport is not a luxury but an imperative. The deployment of modern electric buses will strengthen last-mile connectivity, reduce dependence on private vehicles, ease congestion on narrow city roads and significantly lower carbon emissions, thereby improving overall air quality.

The focus laid by Chief Secretary Atal Dulloo on expediting the development of essential supporting infrastructure, including charging stations and depot facilities, is both pragmatic and necessary. Robust backend systems are critical to ensuring uninterrupted operations and long-term sustainability. Streamlined tendering processes, adherence to national best practices and timely readiness of infrastructure will determine the success of this ambitious rollout.

Equally vital is the seamless integration of these buses into the existing transport ecosystem. Intelligent route planning, optimal frequency, affordable fare structures and reliable real-time passenger information systems must be prioritised to make public transport the natural choice for commuters. The positive public response to Srinagar's smart city bus service underlines the demand for reliable mass transit and provides a strong foundation for further expansion.

Beyond convenience and efficiency, the environmental dividends of electric mobility are substantial. Lower emissions, reduced noise pollution and cleaner air directly translate into better public health and a more liveable urban environment outcomes of particular importance for an ecologically fragile region like Kashmir.

Yet, infrastructure and fleet expansion alone will not suffice. Continuous monitoring, professional management, staff training and responsive grievance redressal mechanisms will be essential to maintain service quality and public trust.

The PM eBus Sewa Scheme offers Srinagar a rare opportunity to reimagine its urban mobility future. With sustained political will, administrative efficiency and citizen-centric planning, the city can set a benchmark for clean, smart and inclusive public transport steering itself confidently towards a greener and more connected tomorrow.

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# Essence of Science



■ SAHIL MANZOOR BHATTI

How to make science an interesting subject at the middle level. Science means to know about nature and may have other definitions in various different books. Science is one of the most interesting and practical subjects at school, college, or even at the university level. Science has great, vast diversity in various aspects. All the advancement in the world today is because of science, and people are fond of it as it deals with facts and is purely known and renowned among the intellectual class.

Today, we are well aware of important natural phenomena like the water cycle and its importance, earthquakes and their mechanisms, how important sunlight is for us, and how vital it is for living as well as non-living things. Science has opened up most of the mysteries we never knew before. Opens doors for scientists, researchers, and students, as it has great importance and plays a vital role in developing the world in different ways.

Why science is important:  
Science is quite interesting and plays a vital role in our lives. It is with



the blessings of science that I am able to write this article on my smart phone. Every day we observe a gallery of inventions in our surroundings, and this all happened due to the blessings of science and technology. Science has blessed most of the living creatures on this earth in various beneficial ways, like in the medical field, where science has played an immense role in providing respite to the thousands of humans who are suffering from different illnesses and are getting well due to treatment with the help of different machines. Most illnesses are diagnosed after undergoing a number of tests like TSH (thyroid stimulating

hormone), CBC, HB, ultrasound, etc. These are all facilities we are getting due to the advancement of the science field.

How to make science interesting among the students at the middle level in schools:

At the middle level, which includes the 6th, 7th, and 8th standards, students are supposed to learn basic concepts. biological mechanism in our body, functioning of different organs of the human body like the digestive system, skeleton system, nervous system, circulatory system, excretory system, digestion of food how vital components of food reach our body

parts from the complex food items we eat in different forms, like solid or liquid form. How is waste material removed from our body, and what are the organs responsible for this whole process? If a teacher teaches students the parts of plants, he or she should provide a small plant to every student and then tell them the names of the different parts of the plant. Show them plant leaves and explain how stomatal pores take part in transpiration (transpiration is a process by which a plant expels excess water through stomatal pores). Where there are dense plants, forests may cause a cool environment due to the presence of an adequate amount of water in the environment.

A teacher has to teach the learners in a very simple way by using TLM (teaching learning material). Today, one of the most useful social media applications is Youtube, where one can get various techniques that have already been used by teachers for effective learning pedagogy (teaching learning processes). Most of the time, a teacher should follow the best and most effective methods instead of a syllabus. Repeating things may help learners learn things in a very proper way, like repeating them about various important phenomena, like the water cycle, how rain falls, how snow falls, and how earthquakes cause damage, and telling them how they cause damage.

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## Why India Must Use AI to Save What It Already Grows

■ MS. RUBAL CHIB

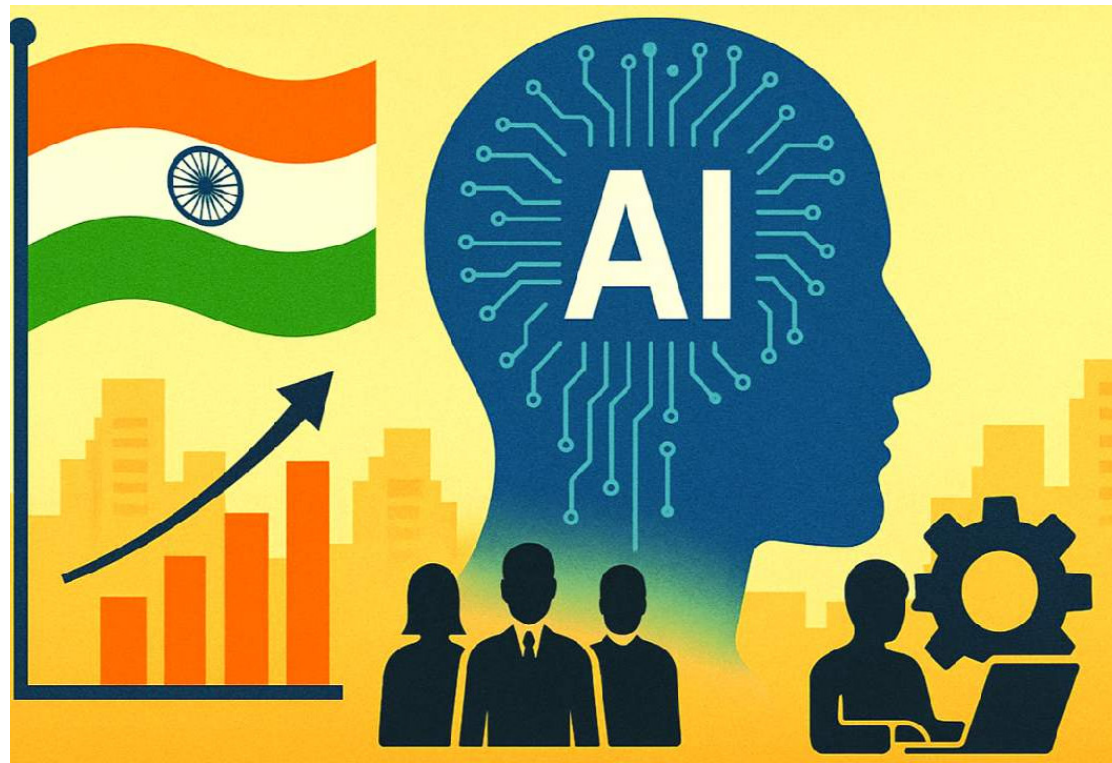
India's conversation on artificial intelligence is maturing. The focus is shifting from abstract capability to applied impact; from what AI can do in theory to what it can solve in practice. Few sectors make this distinction clearer than food and agriculture, where inefficiencies are not marginal but systemic, and where technology must work within deeply local realities of climate, logistics, and markets.

Food systems illustrate the problem starkly. India grows more than enough to feed its population, yet an estimated 68 million tonnes of food are lost every year, with 35-40% of fruits and vegetables perishing after harvest due to breakdowns due to irregular delivery, poor quality assessment, and fragmented supply chains. The crisis is not one of production, but of preventable loss. This loss is not the result of scarcity, but of misalignment—between harvest and consumption, between data and decision-making. For years, the absence of reliable, real-time information about quality and timing have posed a challenge for Indian farmers and regulators. Artificial intelligence, when designed for Indian conditions, offers a way to close this gap.

This gap between biological reality and economic decision-making is where applied AI can deliver disproportionate impact. At qZense Labs, our work began with a simple observation: while India's digital infrastructure has transformed payments, identity and service delivery, the food economy remains largely analogue in how it assesses quality. QScan, the AI-powered sensing system we developed, uses infrared spectroscopy and artificial olfaction to capture internal quality signals in fruits and vegetables and translate them into usable insights at the point of decision. The intent was not to introduce automation for its own sake, but to reduce uncertainty for consumers, farmers, and retailers operating on thin margins.

What this experience has underscored is that AI's effectiveness depends fundamentally on context. Models trained on foreign datasets or standardised supply chains struggle in India's heterogeneous conditions, where crop varieties, climates, storage practices and market structures vary sharply across regions. In food systems especially, accuracy cannot be separated from locality. AI that does not understand Indian produce, Indian logistics and Indian behavioural norms risks being irrelevant at best, and misleading at worst.

This is why the current policy emphasis on sovereign, domestically grounded AI is both timely and necessary. The IndiaAI Mission signals a clear shift in how the state is approaching artificial intelligence— not as a frontier technology divorced from everyday realities, but as developmental infrastructure. Through targeted funding



for indigenous AI applications, investments in national compute capacity, support for Indian datasets, and programmes to incubate sector-specific solutions, the Mission is actively building an ecosystem where innovation is anchored in local needs. By backing homegrown models, start-ups and public-interest deployments, it is creating space for AI systems designed for Indian conditions rather than retrofitted from other geographies.

Food and agriculture illustrate why this matters. Reducing post-harvest losses has a direct bearing on farmer incomes, food prices and environmental outcomes. Every unit of produce saved reduces pressure on land, water and energy resources, aligning naturally with India's commitments on climate action and responsible consumption. Unlike yield-enhancing interventions, which often require behavioural change or new inputs, better quality assessment improves outcomes by improving coordination—helping the system act at the right time.

Equally important is the question of inclusion. For AI to serve the public good, it must be usable by small actors, not just large enterprises. In India's agricultural economy, that means tools that work within informal markets, support local languages, and complement human judgement rather than override it. Technologies that impose opaque recommendations will struggle to earn trust. Those that augment decision-making, by making invisible information visible, are more likely to scale organically.

The India AI Impact Summit, which will take

place from 16-20th February 2026 in our capital city, arrives at a moment when these distinctions are becoming clearer. Globally, AI discourse is grappling with concentration of power, data asymmetries and environmental costs. India's opportunity lies in demonstrating a different pathway, one where intelligence is decentralised, context-aware and embedded within real economic systems. Agriculture, food logistics and climate adaptation are not edge cases in this story; they are central to it.

It is worthwhile to consider that AI does not automatically create impact. It demands deep domain understanding, patience with complex policy realities and close alignment with public institutions. When these conditions are met, however, AI can quietly transform sectors that have long resisted reform. Not through disruption, but through better decisions made earlier.

As the Impact Summit approaches, the task before policymakers, technologists and entrepreneurs is not to accelerate AI adoption indiscriminately, but to deepen it thoughtfully. Success should be measured not by model benchmarks, but by whether intelligence helps reduce waste, stabilise incomes and strengthen resilience. In food systems, as in many areas of India's development journey, AI's greatest contribution may simply be helping us act in time.

The author is the Co-Founder of qZense Labs Private Limited



# Syed Mujtaba Ali: He Was the Mark Twain of India



■ DR. RATAN BHATTACHARJEE

Syed Mujtaba Ali who left us on February 11 in 1974, is often described as the "Mark Twain of India" because of his sharp wit, humor, and satirical style, which he infused into essays, travelogues, and stories. Much like Twain, Ali combined keen observation with irony to expose social absurdities and human follies. Among the galaxy of twentieth-century Bengali writers, some dazzled by philosophical profundity, some stirred minds through political passion, and some illuminated society with realism, yet only a few possessed the rare gift of making readers laugh while at the same time deepening their humanity. Syed Mujtaba Ali stands in that distinguished and almost solitary category. To call him merely a humorist is to underestimate his range, yet to speak of Bengali humour literature without him is impossible. He did not simply write humorous prose; he transformed laughter into a refined literary art. Through wit, travel, memory, and human sympathy he created a body of work that continues to feel startlingly fresh, conversational, and alive even decades after his death.

Mark Twain's *The Innocents Abroad* and Syed Mujtaba Ali's *Deshe Bideshe* stand as two remarkable travel narratives that, though born of different cultural contexts, share a common spirit of wit, satire, and keen observation. Twain's work, published in 1869, chronicles his journey through Europe and the Holy Land aboard the Quaker City, while Ali's book, written in Bengali in 1948, recounts his experiences in Afghanistan during the late 1920s. Both texts are more than travelogues; they are cultural commentaries that use humor to expose human pretensions and societal contradictions. Twain's *The Innocents Abroad* is characterized by irreverence and satire. He mocks the romanticized expectations of American tourists, ridicules the obsession with relics, and questions the authenticity of European traditions. His humor often arises from the clash between the "New World" pragmatism of Americans and the "Old World" grandeur of Europe. Twain's skepticism toward religious relics and cultural clichés reflects his broader critique of blind reverence and superficial tourism. His narrative voice is playful yet biting, making readers laugh while forcing them to reconsider their assumptions about culture and civilization. Ali's *Deshe Bideshe*, on the other hand, offers a South Asian lens on Afghanistan, blending humor with empathy. Unlike Twain's outsider gaze, Ali writes as both insider and outsider—a Bengali Muslim scholar navigating Afghan society, colonial politics, and everyday life. His anecdotes capture the absurdities of bureaucracy, the quirks of Afghan customs, and the ironies of colonial encounters. Yet his humor is never dismissive; it is affectionate, rooted in curiosity and respect for the people he describes. Ali's cosmopolitan background—shaped by studies in India, Germany, and Egypt—allowed him to weave cross-cultural insights into his narrative, making *Deshe Bideshe* a rare and valuable account of Afghanistan in the early 20th century.

The similarities between the two works lie in their use of satire and personal anecdote. Both Twain and Ali transform travel writing into a vehicle for social critique, exposing the contradictions of human behavior across cultures. Yet their differences are equally striking. Twain's humor is sharper, often mocking and irreverent, while Ali's is gentler, infused with empathy and cultural sensitivity. Twain's audience was primarily American readers eager for tales of Europe, whereas Ali wrote for Bengali readers, offering them a window into Afghanistan's society and politics. Twain's narrative reflects the confidence of a rising American identity confronting Europe, while Ali's reflects the complexities of a colonized South Asian intellectual engaging with another Asian culture. Ultimately, *The Innocents Abroad* and *Deshe Bideshe* exemplify how travel writing can transcend mere description to become cultural critique.

Born in 1904 in Karimganj of Sylhet, then part of undivided Bengal, Mujtaba Ali grew up in an environment where languages, cultures and religions intersected naturally. His father Khan Bahadur Syed Sikandar Ali was a scholar and a man of learning, and from his childhood the boy

absorbed curiosity as a habit of mind. It is significant that his humour never emerged from superficial jokes but from deep observation. He learned early to listen to people, to note how they spoke, argued, exaggerated and pretended. Later his writing would become a living museum of human speech. In his works characters do not merely exist; they talk, quarrel, philosophize, boast and confess with astonishing naturalness.

He was educated at Santiniketan under Rabindranath Tagore, and that experience shaped his intellectual and aesthetic temperament profoundly. At Santiniketan he encountered an atmosphere free from narrow nationalism and rigid orthodoxy. Students from different regions and countries mingled, languages flowed into one another, and literature was part of everyday conversation. From Tagore he learned that culture thrives on openness and humour thrives on tolerance. A humourist cannot be dogmatic because laughter requires distance from one's own ego. Mujtaba Ali carried this lesson throughout his life. He could laugh at Hindus, Muslims, Europeans, Bengalis, bureaucrats, scholars and even at himself, yet never wounded the dignity of any community. His humour was inclusive, never cruel. After Santiniketan he traveled widely and studied at Aligarh and later in Kabul, where he worked as a teacher in an Afghan school. Those Afghan years became the seed of his most celebrated book "*Deshe Bideshe*." The work is not merely a travelogue. It is a conversation across civilizations. Instead of describing monuments and geography, he wrote about people — students, shopkeepers, religious scholars, officials, servants and wanderers. Through gentle irony and affectionate curiosity he revealed that human nature is fundamentally similar everywhere. A student in Kabul worrying about examinations, a mullah discussing theology, or a cook bargaining over spices becomes instantly recognizable to a Bengali reader. The laughter that emerges is the laughter of recognition.

His humour depended largely on language. Mujtaba Ali was a polyglot who knew Arabic, Persian, German, French, Urdu and several Indian languages. Yet he chose to write in Bengali with astonishing intimacy. He used colloquial speech, idioms, proverbs and sudden shifts of tone. A sentence might begin with scholarly seriousness and end in mischievous satire. He treated language not as a formal instrument but as a living companion. Readers often feel he is sitting beside them, narrating stories over tea. The conversational style created a revolutionary change in Bengali prose, which until then often carried a certain stiffness.

Another striking feature of his writing is self-mockery. Many humorists ridicule others but hesitate to laugh at themselves. Mujtaba Ali did the opposite. He often presented himself as forgetful, naive, hungry, confused or linguistically embarrassed. The author himself becomes a character, sometimes the most comic one. This self-deprecation created trust between writer and reader. We laugh with him, not at others. During the language movement of East Pakistan, he supported the dignity of Bengali language, believing language is the home of memory. Even in serious matters he used wit as persuasion. His arguments were sharper because they were gentle.

Books like "*Panchatantra*," "*Chacha Kahini*," "*Abishwasyo*," and numerous essays demonstrate his versatility. He wrote about food, etiquette, linguistic confusion, scholarly pretensions, travel inconveniences, and the peculiar psychology of educated middle class Bengalis. One of his favourite subjects was the Bengali obsession with prestige. Through humorous anecdotes he revealed how people pretend knowledge they do not possess, quote foreign authors incorrectly, or display cultural superiority in trivial matters. Readers recognized themselves and laughed, sometimes uncomfortably. This is the highest form of humour: reform through amusement.

His humour never depended on slapstick or exaggeration alone. It was intellectual yet accessible. A professor and a village reader could enjoy him equally. This universality explains his lasting popularity. Even today young readers encountering him for the first time feel contemporary relevance. His observations about education, bureaucracy, cultural imitation and linguistic pride remain accurate. The world changed technologically but human behavior remained remarkably constant, and he captured that permanent human comedy. He also understood timing in prose. The pause before a punchline, the placement of an unexpected word, or the sudden reversal of expectation created comic



**Mark Twain's *The Innocents Abroad* and Syed Mujtaba Ali's *Deshe Bideshe* stand as two remarkable travel narratives that, though born of different cultural contexts, share a common spirit of wit, satire, and keen observation. Twain's work, published in 1869, chronicles his journey through Europe and the Holy Land aboard the Quaker City, while Ali's book, written in Bengali in 1948, recounts his experiences in Afghanistan during the late 1920s. Both texts are more than travelogues; they are cultural commentaries that use humor to expose human pretensions and societal contradictions. Twain's *The Innocents Abroad* is characterized by irreverence and satire. He mocks the romanticized expectations of American tourists, ridicules the obsession with relics, and questions the authenticity of European traditions. His humor often arises from the clash between the "New World" pragmatism of Americans and the "Old World" grandeur of Europe. Twain's skepticism toward religious relics and cultural clichés reflects his broader critique of blind reverence and superficial tourism.**

effect. Often he narrated a story seriously and concluded with a single understated sentence that produced laughter. This restraint distinguished him from writers who rely on excessive jokes. His humour was elegant. Like a classical musician, he knew that silence enhances sound.

His travels in Europe added another dimension. Living in Germany, he observed European discipline and Bengali improvisation with equal amusement. He never blindly admired the West nor blindly rejected it. Instead he compared habits playfully. For example, he might describe how Europeans keep strict schedules while Bengalis treat time as a philosophical sug-

gestion. The humour arises from contrast, yet there is no contempt. He appreciated differences and encouraged readers to do the same. The humanism underlying his humour deserves special attention. Many writers create characters as types; Mujtaba Ali created individuals. Even minor figures are memorable because he notices their gestures and speech patterns. A cook's pride in culinary skill, a student's fear of examination, or a scholar's vanity becomes vivid. He respected ordinary people. Laughter becomes an expression of affection. In this sense his humour resembles that of Cervantes or Mark Twain, where comedy reveals compassion.

He wrote essays on food with delightful seriousness. A simple meal becomes a philosophical exploration. Through descriptions of kebabs, tea, rice or spices he evoked cultural history. Food in his writing is not merely taste but memory, migration and identity. Readers laugh at his enthusiasm yet also feel nostalgia. He could elevate everyday experience into literature without pretension. As a teacher he influenced students deeply. Those who heard his lectures recall that his classroom resembled a theatre of ideas. He quoted Persian poetry, Sanskrit aphorisms and modern anecdotes within the same discussion. Education, for him, was conversation rather than instruction. This pedagogical spirit appears in his essays, where knowledge flows naturally within storytelling. Readers learn history, linguistics and philosophy without realizing they are being educated.

Another reason for his enduring appeal is balance. He never allowed humour to become cynicism. Cynicism destroys hope, whereas his writing preserves optimism. Even when criticizing society, he believed in human goodness. The laughter he evokes is cleansing, not corrosive. After reading him, one feels lighter but also wiser. His contribution to Bengali prose style is immense. He demonstrated that simplicity can be sophisticated. By avoiding unnecessary ornamentation, he achieved clarity. Many later columnists and essayists adopted conversational tone because he proved its literary power. Today newspaper humour columns, travel essays and personal memoirs in Bengali owe a debt to him, whether acknowledged or not. During his lifetime he did not accumulate wealth or institutional power. He moved frequently, worked in different jobs, and sometimes faced financial difficulty. Yet perhaps this instability enriched his writing. A settled bureaucratic life might have reduced his curiosity. Instead he remained a traveler, both geographically and intellectually. He belonged everywhere and nowhere, and therefore could observe everything.

Readers often remark that opening one of his books feels like meeting an old friend. This intimacy arises because he respected readers' intelligence. He never forced laughter through loudness; he invited participation. The reader completes the humour by understanding implication. Thus reading becomes collaboration. In evaluating humour literature in Bengali, predecessors like Parashuram and successors like Shibram Chakraborty certainly contributed immensely. Yet Mujtaba Ali occupies a unique position. Parashuram often used sharp satire and Shibram playful absurdity, but Mujtaba Ali combined travel narrative, linguistic observation, and philosophical reflection. His humour emerges from life itself rather than constructed comic situations. He did not need fictional plots; reality provided abundant comedy.

He passed away on Feb 11 in 1974, but his voice did not fade. New editions of his books continue to appear, quoted in conversations and classrooms. Students memorize his anecdotes; writers imitate his style; readers return to him during moments of weariness. In a world increasingly tense and polarized, his laughter becomes especially valuable. It teaches that understanding begins with humility and humour is a bridge between cultures. Ultimately, calling him the King of Humour Literature is not exaggeration but recognition. He ruled no territory except the imagination of readers, yet that kingdom remains vibrant. His crown was woven from language, curiosity and kindness. He showed that laughter is not trivial entertainment but a form of wisdom. To laugh intelligently is to accept human imperfection while still loving humanity.

Syed Mujtaba Ali reminds us that literature need not always be solemn to be profound. A smile can carry philosophy, a joke can challenge prejudice, and a story told over tea can outlive academic treatises. His writings continue to travel across generations just as he traveled across continents, carrying with them a gentle voice saying that the world is vast, people are diverse, and the best way to understand them is first to laugh with them. Through that laughter he achieved immortality in Bengali letters.

International Tagore Awardee multi lingual writer Dr. Ratan Bhattacharjee is a former Affiliate Faculty Virginia Commonwealth University & Retd. Associate Professor and Head Post Graduate Dept of English Dum Dum Matijheel College, also the President Kolkata Indian American Society Email, prof.ratanbhat-tacharjee@gmail.com



# Health Benefits of Pineapple



■ SAHIL MANZOOR BHATTI

Fresh fruits and vegetables are beneficial for good health and contain most of the essential components of food, such as vitamins, carbohydrates, minerals, etc. During winters in Kashmir, most essential commodities skyrocket in price, and people purchase fresh vegetables, fruits, and other items according to their pocket. These days, even in remote villages, load-carrier autos bring fresh vegetables to the main markets at standard rates. Such initiatives should be appreciated.

During winters, our bodies often become weak because we do not consume sufficient water and other healthy food components regularly. Another unfortunate reality is that during winters we do not get fresh fruits and vegetables easily, and the prices of basic commodities in the Kashmir Valley rise sharply. As a result, people live according to what their pockets allow.

We have a healthy horticulture sector in the Kashmir Valley. We can grow seasonal fruits and should also grow winter fruits under greenhouse sheds. Such initiatives may allow us to play an important role in the economy as well as in sustainable development.

Every individual wants to look good and remain healthy and fit. Everyone wants to live longer on this earth. Some people are lucky enough to have all luxurious means of living, while others have to



struggle and are deprived. However, in reality, we all need adequate food for proper body growth. The combination of organ systems in our body functions for our survival and keeps us healthy and happy. There are many factors responsible for good health, including a balanced diet, exercise, regular medical check-ups, and good hygiene.

In this article, I am going to explore the health benefits of pineapple. Pineapple is a tropical fruit found in different parts of the world such as India, China, and Thailand. It is available in most grocery shops in fresh, dried, and juice forms. Doctors suggest eating fresh and healthy food items, as they contain fibre, nutrients, vitamins, and minerals, which are vital for good health and proper growth.

Pineapple has numerous health benefits, including improved digestion, prevention of asthma and diabetes, and reduction in the risk of cancer. It helps in healing inflammation and also affects the fertility of both males and females, as it is rich in vitamin C and antioxidants. Pineapples are packed with useful nutrients, minerals, vitamins, and antioxidants.

Pineapple contains an enzyme called bromelain, which plays an important role in providing health benefits. It is also an excellent source of antioxidants. Antioxidants combat the formation of free radicals, which can cause cancer. Pineapple also strengthens the skin and helps prevent wrinkles.

Gynaecologists suggest antioxidant-rich food items to patients complaining of infertility disorders because free radicals damage the reproductive system of those trying to conceive.

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# DM Jammu issues order regulating Spa and Massage Centres

## HT NEWS NETWORK

**JAMMU, FEB 11:** In order to regulate the functioning of Spa and Massage Centres and to prevent misuse of such establishments for unlawful and immoral activities, the District Magistrate Jammu, Dr. Rakesh Minhas, has issued an order under Section 163 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS), 2023. The order has been promulgated in view of reports that certain spa and massage centres operating in district Jammu were allegedly being used for immoral activities, prostitution and other unlawful acts, thereby posing a threat to public order and safety.

The order defines a Spa/Massage Centre as any premises, establishment, shop, clinic or commercial space, by whatever name called, which offers or claims to offer massage, body therapy, spa therapy, wellness

therapy, relaxation services, ayurvedic therapy, physiotherapy (other than those run by qualified registered medical practitioners) or similar services, whether for consideration or otherwise. The directions issued shall apply to all such establishments operating within the territorial jurisdiction of district Jammu.

As per the order, engaging in any form of immoral activity within the premises has been strictly prohibited. Cross-gender massage shall not be permitted and there shall be provision of male masseurs for massage of males and female masseurs for massage of females only. The order further stipulates that no internal locks, latches, bolts or locking mechanisms shall be installed in treatment rooms and that spa or massage services shall not be provided behind locked doors. Installation of CCTV cameras at entry points, reception areas and



common areas, excluding private rooms, has been made mandatory with a minimum recording retention period of thirty days.

The order also directs that no centre shall operate before 8:00 AM and after 9:00 PM. No

female employee shall use the premises as residence or for night stay. Supply or consumption of alcohol or any other intoxicant within the premises has been prohibited. Mandatory production of valid identity proof by all customers shall

be ensured and a proper register containing their contact details shall be maintained. All employees shall wear identity cards issued by the employer during working hours and the employer shall maintain a register of all employees. No

employee below eighteen years of age shall be engaged. Further, all owners, managers and employees, including therapists, receptionists and support staff, must undergo police verification.

The order also mandates that display boards in both English and Hindi shall be installed at appropriate places at the reception containing the site plan of the premises, the category-wise number of beds for male and female sections and details of employees including their designation and qualifications. Owners and managers have been directed to submit an affidavit in the form of an undertaking to the nearest police station within ten days, confirming compliance with all the prescribed conditions.

It has been stipulated that any spa or massage centre found violating the order shall be liable for immediate closure and sealing, in addition to prosecution of the owners, managers and employees under relevant laws, including the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita and the Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act. The Senior Superintendent of Police, Jammu, has been directed to ensure effective enforcement of the order, while Sub-Divisional Magistrates and Tehsildars have been instructed to conduct periodic inspections of such establishments within their respective jurisdictions and submit compliance reports to the Office of the District Magistrate.

The order has come into force with immediate effect and shall remain operative for a period of eight weeks from the date of issuance, unless withdrawn, modified or rescinded earlier. The District Administration has reiterated its commitment to maintaining public order and ensuring that all commercial establishments operate strictly in accordance with the law.

## Army Conducts Coaching Classes for Gujjar & Bakkarwal Children at Sinthan Maidan

### HT NEWS NETWORK

**KISHTWAR, FEB 11:** Under the aegis of Operation Sadbhavana, the Indian Army initiated coaching classes for Gujjar and Bakkarwal children at Sinthan Maidan, District Kishtwar. This initiative aims to ensure academic continuity for children from migratory communities who move seasonally to high-altitude grazing grounds, where access to formal education is limited. By conducting these classes, the Indian Army is providing structured academic support to enhance learning outcomes and encourage youth engagement in national development. The project reflects the Indian Army's unwavering commitment to welfare, community outreach and capacity-building in remote areas. Local communities have expressed their gratitude for the Indian Army's continued efforts to promote education and social upliftment in the region, ensuring a brighter future for the children of Kishtwar.

## SMVDSB Initiates Swift Implementation of 76th Board Meeting Decisions

### HT NEWS NETWORK

**KATRA, FEB 11:** Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board (SMVDSB) has fast-tracked the implementation of key decisions taken during its 76th Board Meeting held on February 8 under the Chairmanship of Shri Manoj Sinha, Hon'ble Lieutenant Governor, J&K-UT, reaffirming its commitment to enhancing pilgrim facilities, promoting regional development and strengthening community engagement.

In line with the directions of the Board, the Shrine Board has commenced consultations with key stakeholders and initiated the formulation of a comprehensive strategy for youth engagement in the sports sector along with promotion of pilgrimage in and around Katra.

In this regard, Shri Sachin Kumar Vaishya, Chief Executive

Officer, along with senior officers of the Board, held a series of meetings today with delegations from the sports sector as well as stakeholders of the Hotel and Restaurant Association, Katra.

A delegation led by Shri Shiv Kumar Sharma, Former Joint Secretary, J&K State Sports Council (JKSSC) and President, J&K Indian Style Wrestling Association, along with other representatives from the sports fraternity, held detailed discussions on various aspects of sports development in the region. Emphasizing the importance of youth engagement and community development through sports, the deliberations focused on formulating a comprehensive strategy to actively engage local youth and nurture sporting talent across the region. A roadmap for structured coaching support, infrastructure strengthening and



capacity-building initiatives was also deliberated to establish a sustainable and inclusive sports ecosystem and to encourage wider participation in sporting activities. It was further decided to organize youth interaction programmes to understand their aspirations and challenges in the sports arena and to hold

follow-up meetings with stakeholders for finalizing and implementing the proposed initiatives in a phased manner.

A delegation led by Shri Rakesh Wazir, President, Hotel and Restaurant Association, Katra along with hotel owners held detailed deliberations on formulating a multi-pronged strategy for pro-

moting pilgrimage destinations in and around Katra with the objective of enriching the overall spiritual and tourism landscape. The proposed strategy will focus on enhanced publicity, strengthened visitor information systems, improved connectivity and coordinated outreach in collaboration with local stakeholders, aimed at encouraging longer pilgrim stays and promoting diversified pilgrimage circuits. Special emphasis was also laid on the revival and promotion of traditional and ancient pilgrimage routes associated with the Yatra.

The CEO stated that the Shrine Board is committed to implementing these initiatives, which are expected to strengthen the overall pilgrimage ecosystem, generate local employment opportunities and promote sustainable tourism growth in and around Katra.

# J&K BJP observes Samarpan Diwas on Punyatithi of Pt. Deendayal Upadhyay across J&K

## HT NEWS NETWORK

**JAMMU/KASHMIR, FEB 11:** Jammu & Kashmir Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) observed Samarpan Diwas on the Punyatithi (death anniversary) of party ideologue Pt. Deendayal Upadhyay with programmes held at district levels across the Union Territory, where senior party leaders paid rich tributes to the great thinker, philosopher, and architect of BJP's ideological foundation.

J&K BJP President and MP (Rajya Sabha), Sat Sharma CA, paid floral tributes to Pt. Deendayal Upadhyay at New Delhi. Remembering his immense political and ideological contribution, Sat Sharma said that Pt. Deendayal Upadhyay was not merely a political thinker but a visionary who gave Bharatiya politics a value-based direction through the philosophy of Inte-

gral Humanism. He said that Pt. Deendayal's thoughts continue to guide the BJP's policies and programmes even today. He emphasized that the political relevance of Pt. Deendayal Upadhyay lies in his people-centric approach, where governance is rooted in ethics, nationalism, and social justice. "From Panchayat to Parliament, BJP's commitment to the last person standing in the queue reflects Deendayal ji's vision," he asserted.

Ashok Koul, General Secreter (Organization), J&K BJP, paid tributes at the party office in Srinagar and highlighted the organizational strength derived from Pt. Deendayal Upadhyay's ideology. He said that Antyodaya, upliftment of the poorest of the poor is the soul of BJP's governance model. He stated that welfare schemes aimed at farmers, labourers, women, youth, and marginalized sections are



practical manifestations of Deendayal ji's philosophy, which the Modi-led government has effectively implemented across the nation.

At the BJP Headquarters, Trikuta Nagar, Jammu, the Samarpan Diwas programme was addressed by former Deputy Chief

is devotedly following Deendayal ji's path to realize the goal of Antyodaya and inclusive national development.

Baldev Singh Billawaria shed light on the inspiring life journey of Pt. Deendayal Upadhyay, describing him as a selfless nationalist who dedicated his entire life to the service of the nation and society, without seeking power or position.

The programme was attended by J&K BJP Vice-Presidents Bharat Bhushan, Rajiv Charak, and Rekha Mahajan, General Secretary Gopal Mahajan, Parbhat Singh Jamwal, Tilak Gupta, Dr. Pardeep Mahotra, Dr. Makson Tikoo, Ved Sharma, Naresh Singh Jasrotia, Dharminder Kumar, Rakesh Pant, Neha Mahajan, and others. The event was organized by the Aajivan Sahayog Nidhi Department led by Convenor Prem Gupta, along with co-convenors Yudhvir Sambyal and Ajay Anand.

Minister Dr. Nirmal Singh and General Secretary Baldev Singh Billawaria.

Dr. Nirmal Singh said that BJP has reached its present pinnacle solely due to its unwavering commitment to the ideology of Pt. Deendayal Upadhyay. He added that Prime Minister Narendra Modi

## Rakesh Mahajan Meets Cultural Delegation, Raises Concern Over Non-Disbursement of State Awards

### HT NEWS NETWORK

**JAMMU, FEB 11:** A delegation comprising office bearers of the Sanskriti Art and Culture Cell called on Rakesh Mahajan, State Vice President, BJP, to raise serious concerns regarding the non-disbursement of State Awards announced by the government over the past three years.

The delegation included Narendra Singh, State Incharge, Sanskriti Art and Culture Cell; Sahil Mahajan, State Co-Incharge, Sanskriti Art and Culture Cell; Raman Singh Salathia, State Awardee and Co-Incharge, Sanskriti Art and Culture Cell; and renowned social activist and singer Sandhya Sharma.

During the meeting, Raman Singh Salathia, a renowned Dogri singer and State Awardee, highlighted that although the State Government has formally announced State Awards for the past three years, the awardees have neither received the prize money nor the official certificates to date. He expressed deep disappointment, stating that artists dedicate their lives to preserving and promoting culture with the hope that governmental recognition will honor and encourage their efforts. However, the absence of tangible recognition has left many awardees disheartened.

Expressing shock and concern over the issue, Rakesh Mahajan termed the matter "deeply unfortunate." He said it is disheartening that artists who bring pride to the state through their talent are left waiting for basic recognition after being declared awardees. He further stated that the state already lacks structured provisions and institutional support to help artists grow and reach national platforms, and such negligence only adds to their struggles.

Mahajan appealed to the concerned department and the government to immediately address the issue and ensure that the pending prize money and official certificates are released without further delay. He assured the delegation that he would take up the matter at the appropriate level and fight to secure the rightful dues of the artists.

On behalf of the delegation, Narendra Singh and Raman Singh Salathia thanked Rakesh Mahajan for taking up the issue seriously and for assuring support in raising the matter with the government.

The delegation expressed hope that the government will act promptly to uphold the dignity and morale of the state's artists.

## DC Kathua presides over awareness programme for construction workers

Distributes Cheques worth Rs 7.51 lakh as education assistance

### HT NEWS NETWORK

**KATHUA, FEB 11:** Labour Department Kathua today organised an awareness programme for unorganised and construction workers to sensitise them to the New Labour Codes and the Welfare and Social Security Schemes of the department.

Deputy Commissioner, Rajesh Sharma, who was the chief guest, presided over the programme.

Addressing the gathering, the Deputy Commissioner stressed the need for maximum awareness and wider coverage of the unorganised labour under different welfare initiatives of the Government. He urged workers to register themselves on the e-Shram portal and with the Building

Workers Welfare Board to avail financial assistance for education, disability, accidental death and other social security benefits. "By contributing a nominal amount every month under schemes like Pradhan Mantri Shram Yogi Maandhan Yojana, workers can secure pension support and financial stability for themselves and their families," he informed. Observing that the penetration of such schemes in Kathua has remained limited, he emphasised the need to reach every eligible beneficiary through sustained awareness drives and person-to-person mobilization.

The Deputy Commissioner reiterated that saturation of social security schemes remains a priority and directed the concerned officers to intensify registration

campaigns across the district.

The programme was conducted under the supervision of Assistant Labour Commissioner, Piyusha Khajuria.

She highlighted that the objective of the event was to educate workers about their rights, registration procedures and the benefits available to them under different welfare schemes. She also elaborated on the salient features of the Labour Codes, stating that the reforms aim to expand social security coverage and improve access to benefits for workers in the unorganised sector.

The workers were informed about the provisions of the Building and Other Construction Workers Welfare Scheme, including financial assistance, medical aid, edu-

cational support for children, marriage assistance and other welfare measures.

A nukkad natak was presented to emphasise the importance of registration and to spread awareness about the benefits available under different schemes.

Labour Inspector Kathua spoke on the Pradhan Mantri Shram Yogi Maandhan Yojana, explaining the eligibility criteria, contribution pattern and assured pension after the age of 60 years and encouraged workers to enroll for securing their future.

Later, the Deputy Commissioner handed over cheques amounting Rs. 75,18,500 as education assistance to children of more than 1200 workers registered with the Building and Other Construction Workers Welfare Board.





# Formal staffing companies giving opportunity to secure and stable employment: Report

■ UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

**NEW DELHI, FEB 11:** The Indian staffing industry is helping bridge inter-state migration by matching labor supply from high-unemployment states with demand in urban and industrial hubs, said a report released by Indian Staffing Federation on Tuesday here.

The report titled 'Flexi Employment Social Impact 2026' said that inter-state migration in India is driven primarily by work/employment addressing mismatches where local labor is scarce.

Shedding light on industrial data, it said, "In FY25, the industry added 61pc of new EPFO additions under Age group 29. Benefits include skill development, social security, wage protection and exposure to different sectors like FMCG, eCommerce and manufacturing, reducing youth unemployment (around 11pc



nationally)."

The report also said that the employment market saw a notably reduced fixed-term employment preference among flexi-workforce by 13pc in 2025 which reflects lack of access to opportunities once the FTE contract ends.

Highlighting the jobs which were

in demand last year, the report said, "High levels of education that cover Graduates and above, were more in demand at 63pc among the flexi workforce."The report presenting a distribution on gender said that women workforce participation in flexi staffing industry is at 27pc with a slight increase of 4pc from

the previous year, while male workforce participation continues to dominate at 73pc.

With 10 crore migrant workers contributing to 10pc of India's GDP staffing industry, it enables fair mobility by providing:- (i) Structured placement (ii) Reducing exploitation (iii) Ensuring access to formal jobs (iv) Rural-to-urban migration, it added.

The report said that the staffing industry ensures compliance with legal channels under the four Labour Codes (Code on Wages 2019, Industrial Relations Code 2020, Code on Social Security 2020, Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions Code 2020), which consolidate 29 central laws.

In 2025, the contract staffing industry generated Rs 48,215 cr in contributions ensuring protections. UNI

## Stock market extends winning streak, Nifty inches closer to 26,000

■ UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

**NEW DELHI, FEB 11:** The stock market on Tuesday extended its winning streak for a third straight session with the Nifty inching closer to 26,000 intraday.

At close, the Sensex was up 208.17 points or 0.25 percent at 84,273.92, and the Nifty was up 67.85 points or 0.26 percent at 25,935.15. BSE 150 MidCap Index climbed 0.21%, while the BSE 250 SmallCap Index rose by 0.46%. The overall market capitalisation of BSE-listed firms rose to over Rs 474 lakh crore from Rs 473 lakh crore in the previous session.

On Nifty, around 27 stocks ended higher with the top gainers, Eternal up by 5.19%, Tata Steel up by 2.90%, and ONGC up by 1.88%. The top losers were HCL Technologies (2.03%), Bajaj Finance (1.82%), and Dr. Reddy's Laboratories (1.55%).

Among the sectors, almost all indices ended higher except for Nifty Pharma which was down by 0.36%, Healthcare down by 0.27%, PSU Bank down by 0.19%, and Nifty Bank down by 0.07%.

Nifty Media was up 2.40% and Auto up



by 1.37% registering strong gains.

On the BSE, around 127 stocks hit their 52-week highs while 56 stocks hit their 52-week lows in intraday trade on the BSE.

Those on the highs were SBI, Titan, Tata Steel, UltraTech Cement, Shriram Finance, Samvardhana Motherson International, JSW Steel, and Indus Towers. On the lows were Kansai Nerolac Paints, Dreamfolks Services, and Pine Labs.

Among the key auto stocks, Eicher Motors and Maruti Suzuki shares rose over 1% while Tata Motors Passenger Vehicles shares closed in the green with marginal gains.

Shares of SBI emerged as the top gainer on the index, rising nearly 8% to touch a fresh 52-week high. UNI

## Formula Group secures strategic investment from Japan's Relo Group

■ UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

**NEW DELHI, FEB 11:** Formula Group, a leading relocation management and corporate mobility services company, has entered into a strategic partnership with Japan's Relo Group Inc, which has acquired a significant minority stake in the Indian firm as part of its global expansion strategy, an official statement said here on Tuesday.

The partnership marks an important milestone for Formula Group as it looks to strengthen its presence in the employee mobility and corporate relocation segment in India, while also accelerating international growth.

The transaction brings together Formula Group's established market position, operational expertise and customer-centric approach with Relo Group's global experience and strong capabilities in the Japanese and international markets.

Grant Thornton acted as the exclusive financial advisor to Formula Group for the transaction.

Industry observers said the alliance is expected to enhance Formula Group's leadership in integrated corporate mobility solutions in India, while providing Relo Group with a stronger foothold in the fast-growing Indian employee mobility market.

Commenting on the partnership, Ankit Ahuja, Partner at Grant Thornton Bharat, said the collaboration would strengthen Formula Group's position in relocation and corporate mobility by leveraging Relo Group's global footprint and expertise, while allowing the Japanese group to tap into Formula Group's established brand and operational strengths in India.

Founded in 2004, Formula Group provides integrated relocation and corporate mobility services to domestic and international clients, including several Fortune 500 companies. Its services span global mobility programmes, relocation management, destination services, corporate housing, immigration support, fleet management and other related offerings. The company is headquartered in New Delhi and operates across multiple cities in India.

Relo Group, established in 1967 and listed in Japan, is a major provider of outsourced corporate services, particularly in the area of employee mobility and relocation. It supports Japanese enterprises in overseas expansion through services covering international assignments, global consulting, business travel and the integration of foreign employees. UNI

## Kerala recorded 2.2 cr domestic tourist arrivals last year, surpassing pre-COVID levels in several segments

■ UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

**HYDERABAD, FEB 11:** Kerala Tourism Department here on Tuesday said it recorded 2.2 crore domestic tourist visits last year, marking a strong post-pandemic rebound, with arrivals in several segments surpassing pre-Covid levels, reflecting renewed confidence and growing demand for travel to the state.

Kerala Tourism has rolled out a refreshed promotional strategy with the tagline 'Travel Now, Post Later', placing emphasis on authentic, immersive travel experiences rather than social-media-driven tourism, Kerala tourism information officer Sooraj PK told reporters on the sidelines of an exclusive media session hosted as part of Network Kerala, a premier B2B tourism meet held here on Tuesday. The move comes as the state records a strong post-COVID revival in domestic tourism and a gradual recovery in foreign arrivals, he said.

Tourist inflow from southern

and central Indian states, especially Telangana and Hyderabad in particular has shown sharp growth, aided by improved air and rail connectivity.

While domestic tourism has bounced back robustly, international tourist arrivals are still recovering, with around 7,000 foreign visitors recorded in 2024, mainly from the UK and the USA, he informed.

Kerala is currently served by four airports, with additional access through Coimbatore and Mangaluru, all well connected to major cities like Hyderabad; he said enhanced train services have further improved access to both southern and northern parts of the state.

In a strategic shift, tourism promotion is now expanding beyond traditional southern destinations to northern Kerala, including Wayanad, Kozhikode, Bekal, Kasargod, and Kannur, he said. The region's cultural highlight, the Theyyam festival, running till June, is drawing increased attention from domestic and international

travelers, he said.

Cultural tourism remains a key pillar, with global events such as the Kochi Biennale continuing till March 31, and the Nisargundi Dance Festival beginning February 13 in Thiruvananthapuram, he said.

Kerala is also reinforcing its reputation as a health and wellness tourism hub, with Ayurveda, wellness retreats, and advanced medical treatments attracting visitors from across India and abroad, he said.

The state is developing new international-standard beach projects, including Blue Flag-certified beaches at Kozhikode and Kannur, he said post-COVID, there has also been a surge in home stays and service villas, offering tourists more personalised and localised experiences.

With diversified destinations, improved connectivity, and a renewed focus on meaningful travel, Kerala Tourism aims to strengthen its position as a premier, experience-driven destination, he said.

## Carlyle Group, Salisbury Investments to acquire Nido Home from Edelweiss

■ UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

**CHENNAI, FEB 11:** CA Sardo Investments, an affiliate of The Carlyle Group, and Salisbury Investments Private Limited, an investment vehicle of Aditya Puri and his family, will acquire 75 per cent stake in Nido Home Finance Ltd -- a wholly owned subsidiary of Edelweiss Financial Services Ltd.

In a regulatory filing today, Edelweiss said the buyers will be acquiring a 45 pc stake in Nido Home from Edelweiss Financial and its wholly owned subsidiaries Edelweiss Rural & Corporate Services Limited (ERCSL), Edel Finance Company Limited (EFCL).



The buyers will also be subscribing to equity shares and warrants of Nido Home. Upon completion of sale and allotment of equity shares and warrants by Nido Home as contemplated in the transaction, the two buyers will hold approximately 73 pc of the shareholding of Nido Home on a fully diluted basis.

Edelweiss Financial and EFCL will sell 100 shares each of Nido Home for Rs.19,300 each and ERCSL will sell 3,12,07,300 shares for Rs. 6,02,30,08,900.

"Pursuant to the Agreements and subject to applicable laws, the Sellers (Edelweiss) may also receive an additional payment based upon returns realized by CA Sardo Investments from its investment in Nido," Edelweiss Financial said.

CA Sardo Investments will subscribe for 25,721,891 equity shares and 51,443,782 warrants while Salisbury Investments will subscribe for 1,84,845 equity shares and 3,69,690 warrants. UNI

## Electronics industry hails India-US trade deal, true 'catalyst' for market expansion

■ SOURAV SHEKHAR

**NEW DELHI, FEB 11:** India's electronics industry welcomed the India-US trade deal and expected it to open up opportunity of market expansion for electronics and semiconductor products in the global marketplace, especially for MSMEs.

Sectorally, the industry feels, the trade pact will enable advanced partnerships in Semiconductors, design and IPs. It will also provide Indian companies access to electronic components such as IC substrates, sensors and microcontrollers, carbon fibres and some specialty materials.

Sharing insights on this deal, Rajesh M Revankar, Vice Chairman Electronics and Computer Software Export Promotion Council (ESC) said, "The India-US Free Trade Agreement (FTA) envisages tariff reductions for Indian exports to the United States

and deeper bilateral trade engagement, creating unprecedented opportunities for India's electronics and semiconductor sectors in terms of global market access, investment inflows and integration into high-value supply chains."

Shedding light on sectoral expansion, he said that this FTA can help the country in diversifying the electronics export market which is currently highly skewed toward smartphones (nearly 70pc of total exports), while opening new frontiers in semiconductor design, IP, and chip-related exports.

On the investment front, Revankar noted that this agreement is expected to attract higher FDI into electronics, semiconductors, and advanced packaging and testing, encouraging global players to establish manufacturing facilities, GCCs and R&D centers in India as a strategic alternative



to mitigate geopolitical risk.

"Beyond export competitiveness driven by tariff rationalisation, the FTA signals a significant opportunity for India to move up the value chain—from final assembly to deeper localisation of components and sub-assemblies, stronger supplier ecosystems, and expanded system integration capabilities" he said.

Revankar believes that this deal represents a pivotal inflection point for India's electronics and semiconductor industry.

Coming on semiconductors,

he said that the FTA strengthens India's position as a global semiconductor design and verification hub by enabling IP creation and chip-architecture partnerships.

"In the near term, ATMP/OSAT capacity presents attractive opportunities due to lower capital intensity and faster time-to-market for US semiconductor companies" he added.

ATMP or Assembly, Testing, Marking and Packaging OSAT or Outsourced Semiconductor Assembly and Test are critical backend processes in the semiconductor supply chain that convert raw and fabricated wafers into finished chips.

Another industry veteran, Amrit Manwani, Chairman Sahasra Group, said, "India - US trade deal is a welcome development for the Electronics sector. The deal will enable growth of electronics hardware exports to the USA and help India become an integral and

important player in the global value chain."

Manwani said that the trade deal will help MSME companies to seriously explore and expand their footprint in the USA. The government's efforts in negotiating this lucrative trade deal needs huge applause from the Electronics industry.

Highlighting some challenges, Veer Sagar, Chairman of ESC said that electronics is well insulated but the only problem could have been with movements of manpower and visas.

He pointed out that the issue related to manpower and visas 'hasn't been touched.'

"All indications are positive for IT, both hardware and software. We can look forward to lots of US investments into India and collaborations, especially AI and design integration" he added, highlighting the optimistic view for the hardware and software industry. UNI

## Diversification--key for broking firms to shield from policy shifts: Crisil

■ UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

**NEW DELHI, FEB 11:** Diversification of revenue streams has emerged as a critical buffer for broking firms amid rising regulatory and tax-related headwinds, according to a report by Crisil Ratings.

The assessment comes in the backdrop of a proposed increase in securities transaction tax (STT) on derivatives in the union Budget 2026-27 and a series of regulatory changes introduced by the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI).

Crisil Ratings said recent policy measures aimed at curbing speculative activity and enhancing investor protection have led to a sharp decline in trading volumes. Average daily turnover across capital market segments fell by about 25 per cent in the second half of the previous fiscal year, and despite a partial recovery, remains below earlier peaks. This resulted in a six per cent year-on-year decline in industry revenues in the first half of fiscal 2026.

The rating agency analysed the performance of 25 broking firms over fiscal 2025 and the first half of fiscal 2026, categorising them into traditional brokerages, diversified players, and proprietary trading firms. The study found that firms with diversified income sources, such as distribution, wealth management, investment banking, and interest income from margin trading facilities, were better positioned to absorb market volatility.

According to Crisil, diversified players derived nearly two-thirds of their revenues from non-broking and non-trading activities, enabling them to record the least impact from regulatory and volume-related disruptions. In contrast, traditional brokerage firms, which depend heavily on transaction fees, saw revenues decline by around 15 per cent in the second half of fiscal 2025 compared with the first half.

Proprietary trading firms were the most affected, with revenues falling by about 25 per cent in the second half of fiscal 2025 following SEBI's decision to limit weekly expiry derivative products, which reduced arbitrage opportunities.

Crisil warned that the proposed hike in STT could further impact proprietary traders, including high-frequency traders and arbitrageurs, who account for nearly 60 per cent of market volumes.







## DAY TWO: FESTIVAL OF MOTHER LANGUAGES; 46TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF ADBI MARKAZ KAMRAZ

# Voices of Identity Resonate on Day Two of AMK Conference as Prof Shad Ramzan Bags Sharaf-e-Kamraaz Award

Leaders, litterateurs and scholars renew pledge to preserve mother languages at Jammu's 'Festival of Mother Languages'

■ JEHANGIR BUKHARI

**JAMMU, FEB 11:** The second day of the 46th Annual Literary Conference of Adbi Markaz Kamraz (AMK), being held here under the theme "Festival of Mother Languages," unfolded as a vibrant celebration of linguistic identity, cultural continuity and literary excellence, with renewed calls to preserve and promote mother tongues across Jammu and Kashmir.

A major highlight of the day was the conferment of the prestigious Sharaf-e-Kamraaz Award on eminent

scholar and Sahitya Akademi Convener (New Delhi) Professor Shad Ramzan, in recognition of his outstanding contribution to Kashmiri language, literature and cultural studies. The award was greeted with warm applause from an audience comprising leading writers, poets, academics and socio-political dignitaries.

Adding to the literary fervour, around half a dozen new books, representing diverse genres and regional languages, were also released during the session, reflecting the vibrant and evolving literary landscape of the Union Territory.

The event witnessed the presence of several prominent socio-political personalities, lending weight to the conference's central message of cultural preservation. Addressing the gathering, senior CPI(M) leader and legislator Muhammad Yousuf Tarigami made a strong appeal for safeguarding mother tongues, describing them as the foundation of identity, history and collective memory.

"Languages carry the soul of a people. Preserving and promoting our mother tongues is not merely a cultural responsibility but a social and political neces-

sity to protect our shared heritage," Tarigami said, urging institutions, writers and policymakers to work in close coordination to ensure the survival and growth of indigenous languages.

Throughout the day, speakers stressed that rapid social change, urbanisation and technological shifts have posed serious challenges to native languages, making organised and sustained efforts imperative. They underscored the role of literary organisations like Adbi Markaz Kamraz in creating platforms for dialogue, creativity and collaboration among diverse linguistic communities.

The sessions were marked by lively discussions, literary readings and critical reflections on the evolving role of language in contemporary society, reaffirming the conference's core objective of strengthening cultural bonds and linguistic harmony.

With its blend of intellectual engagement, literary celebration and social advocacy, Day Two of the conference further deepened the momentum generated on the opening day, reinforcing the collective resolve to protect and promote the mother languages of Jammu and Kashmir.

