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## Nation Bows to Pulwama Heroes on 7th Anniversary

PM Modi, Political Leaders Reaffirm Zero Tolerance Against Terror; Solemn Tributes Paid to 40 CRPF Martyrs



**HT NEWS DESK / AGENCIES**  
**SRINAGAR, FEB 14 / (KNO):** Nation on Saturday paid solemn tributes to the 40 CRPF personnel who were killed in the 2019 Pulwama terror attack, with Prime Minister Narendra Modi leading the nation in remembering  
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### Seven Years After Pulwama, Nation Stands United; Shah Sends Stern Warning to Terrorists

**HT NEWS DESK / AGENCIES**  
**SRINAGAR, FEB 14:** Marking Seven Years since the devastating 2019 Pulwama terror attack, the nation on Friday paid solemn tribute to the 40 CRPF personnel who laid down their lives, as Union Home Minister Amit Shah reaffirmed India's uncompromising resolve to eliminate terrorism in all its forms. Describing terrorism as the "greatest  
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### Pulwama Remembrance: CRPF Renews Oath to Crush Terror, Stand by Martyrs' Families

**HT NEWS DESK / KNO**  
**SRINAGAR, FEB 14:** Marking the anniversary of the 2019 Pulwama terror attack, Director General of the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) G.P. Singh on Saturday reaffirmed the force's resolve to eliminate terrorism and pledged continued, long-term support to the families of the 40 personnel who lost their lives. Describing the day as one of  
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## PM Modi okays launch of "PM RAHAT"

**HT NEWS NETWORK**  
**NEW DELHI, FEB 14:** In its very first decision after shifting to Seva Teerth, the Prime Minister approved the launch of the PM RAHAT (Road Accident Victim Hospitalization and Assured Treatment) Scheme, reflecting a governance approach rooted in Seva – service, compassion and protection for vulnerable citizens. The decision underscores the Government's commitment to ensuring that no life is lost due to lack of immediate medical assistance after a road accident. India records a significant number of road accident fatalities every year, many of which are preventable with timely medical intervention. Studies indicate that nearly 50% of road accident deaths can be averted if victims are admitted to hospital within the first hour. By approving PM RAHAT from Seva Teerth, the Prime Minister has prioritized life-saving intervention, financial certainty for hospitals, and a structured emergency response system for accident victims. Integration with the Emergency Response Support System (ERSS) 112 helpline ensures that accident victims reach  
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## Kathua Seals 5-Km Border Belt for 60 Days Amid Firing Fears

**HT NEWS DESK / AGENCIES**  
**JAMMU, FEB 14:** In view of heightened security concerns along the International Border (IB), authorities in Jammu and Kashmir's Kathua district have imposed sweeping restrictions on "unnecessary movement" within a five-kilometre radius of the border for the next 60 days. The order was issued by Kathua District Magistrate Rajesh Sharma under Section 163 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha  
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## Tech-Driven, Organic Farming push to make J&K Produce Globally Competitive: Omar Abdullah

CM Unveils Vision for 'NextGen Agriculture' at GON'GUL-2026

**DR AB QAYOOM**  
**HT CORRESPONDENT**  
**SRINAGAR, FEB 14:** Setting the tone for a technology-led transformation of Jammu and Kashmir's farm economy, Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Friday inaugurated GON'GUL-2026, the 11th AgriTech Mela, and urged farmers, scientists and start-ups to embrace innovation and organic practices to boost productivity and profitability. The three-day mega event, themed "NextGen  
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## Omar Abdullah Backs Stronger India-Bangladesh Ties, Seeks Safeguards for J&K Farmers in Indo-US Deal

**HT NEWS NETWORK**  
**SRINAGAR, FEB 14:** Omar Abdullah on Saturday expressed hope that the new government in  
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## Posters of Wanted JeM Commander Surface in Doda as Security Forces Intensify Hunt

Search Operations Expand Across Chenab Valley Amid Intelligence Inputs of Escape Bid

**HT NEWS DESK / AGENCIES**  
**JAMMU, Feb 14:** Police in Doda district have pasted posters at several strategic locations seeking public assistance in tracing a Pakistani commander of the banned outfit Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM), officials said on Saturday. Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Doda Sandeep Mehta said the wanted terrorist, identified as Saifulah, is believed to be hiding in the Chatroo belt of neighbouring Kishtwar district. Intelligence inputs suggest that he is attempting to flee the area and may try to evade detection by disguising himself, including wearing women's clothing or a burqa. "We have circulated his posters – both with and without a beard – for the information of the general public. He is the main JeM commander who is alive and attempting to escape from the Chatroo belt," the SSP said, urging residents to immediately inform police or security forces if they spot the suspect anywhere. The officer said police and security agencies remain on high alert and are conducting continuous  
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## LG, CM, Cabinet Ministers extend Mahashivratri greetings

**HT NEWS NETWORK**  
**JAMMU, FEB 14:** Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha has extended his heartiest greetings to the people on the auspicious occasion of Mahashivratri, which will be celebrated tomorrow on February 15. In a message, the Lieutenant Governor said: "On the sacred occasion of Mahashivratri, I extend my heartfelt greetings and best wishes to all. I pray for the health, happiness, and prosperity of every citizen."  
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CONTINUE FROM FRONT PAGE.....

**Nation Bows.....**

their sacrifice and reaffirming an unwavering resolve against terrorism.

Marking seven years since the deadly suicide bombing at Lethpora in South Kashmir, leaders across the political spectrum honoured the fallen jawans and expressed solidarity with their families.

In a message on X, the Prime Minister said the devotion and courage of the martyrs remain etched in the nation's collective consciousness. "Every Indian draws strength from their enduring courage," he said, recalling the sacrifice made on February 14, 2019.

Vice President C. P. Radhakrishnan said the supreme sacrifice of the personnel would forever remain in the nation's memory and continue to inspire efforts towards building a strong and secure India.

Union Home Minister Amit Shah described the martyrs' dedication as a lasting inspiration and reiterated the government's commitment to rooting out terrorism in all its forms. Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said the country stands united in honouring the brave personnel and ensuring the safety and security of the nation.

External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar said the sacrifice of the jawans has strengthened India's resolve to pursue zero tolerance against cross-border terrorism.

Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha paid homage to the "valiant martyrs," saying their bravery and selfless service to the motherland will continue to inspire every citizen.

Leaders from the Opposition also joined in paying tribute. Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge said the courage and devotion of the CRPF personnel would always remain etched in public memory, while Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi said the nation would forever remain indebted to the soldiers.

A wreath-laying ceremony was held at the attack site in Lethpora, where senior officials of the CRPF, civil administration and security forces gathered to honour the fallen personnel. The CRPF, in its message, recalled the valour and devotion of its men and reaffirmed its commitment to stand firmly with the families of the martyrs.

The Pulwama attack, one of the deadliest terror strikes in Jammu and Kashmir, continues to resonate deeply across the country, serving as a reminder of the sacrifices made by India's security forces in the line of duty.

**Seven Years After.....**

enemy of humanity," Shah said the country remains steadfast in its mission to wipe out the menace and ensure that the sacrifices of the fallen heroes were not in vain.

In a message posted on X, the Home Minister said the bravery, dedication and supreme sacrifice of the security forces continue to inspire the nation and strengthen its determination to defeat terror.

"The nation will always remain indebted to the courage and sacrifice of our security personnel who confront terrorism," Shah said, reiterating that India is firmly committed to eradicating the threat completely.

The Pulwama attack, carried out on February 14, 2019, saw a suicide bomber affiliated with Pakistan-based outfit Jaish-e-Mohammed ram an explosives-laden vehicle into a CRPF convoy bus on the Srinagar-Jammu National Highway, killing 40 personnel and sparking widespread outrage across the country.

In its aftermath, India launched airstrikes targeting a JEM training camp in Balakot, significantly escalating tensions between New Delhi and Islamabad at the time.

As the country observed the anniversary, tributes poured in for the martyrs, with renewed pledges to uphold their legacy and continue the fight against terrorism with unwavering resolve.

**Pulwama Remembrance.....**

deep emotion and remembrance, Singh said the sacrifice of the fallen soldiers remains etched in the collective memory of the nation. "We lost 40 brave personnel in 2019. We are here to honour their sacrifice," he said, asserting that the CRPF stands firmly with the next of kin (NOKs) not only in remembrance ceremonies but in everyday support.

The tribute comes on the anniversary of the Pulwama attack, in which a suicide bomber targeted a CRPF convoy on the Srinagar-Jammu National Highway on February 14, 2019, killing 40 personnel in one of the deadliest attacks on security forces in the country.

Highlighting welfare measures undertaken since the attack, the DG said 19 martyrs' families have been provided houses, while others have received land allotments with assistance from respective state administrations. Financial packages have been disbursed to all affected families, and compassionate appointments are being extended to eligible dependents as they reach the required age.

To strengthen outreach and ensure quicker redressal of concerns, the CRPF has also launched the "Brave Family App," enabling families of martyrs to connect directly with the force's welfare directorate and track support services seamlessly.

"We stand with the families not just today, but every day. Their concerns are our priority," Singh said, reiterating that the force remains duty-bound both to safeguard the nation and to care for those left behind by its fallen heroes.

Across the country, remembrance ceremonies were held to pay homage to the martyrs, whose sacrifice continues to inspire the force's mission against terrorism. — (KNO)

**PM Modi.....**

hospitals within the Golden Hour. Road accident victims, Rah-Veer (Good Samaritans), or any person at the accident site may dial 112 to obtain details of the nearest designated hospital and request ambulance assistance, enabling swift coordination between emergency responders, police authorities and hospitals.

Under the Scheme, every eligible road accident victim on any category of road will be entitled to cashless treatment up to 1.5 lakh per victim, for period of 7 days from the date of accident. Stabilization treatment will be provided for up to 24 hours in non-life-threatening cases and up to 48 hours in life-threatening cases, subject to police authentication on an integrated digital system.

PMRAHAT is implemented through a robust, technology-driven framework amalgamating the Electronic Detailed Accident Report (eDAR) platform of the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways with the Transaction Management System (TMS 2.0) of the National Health Authority. This integration enables seamless digital linkage from accident reporting to hospital admission, police authentication, treatment administration, claim processing, and final payment. Police confirmation is required within defined timelines – 24 hours for non-life-threatening cases and 48 hours for life-threatening cases – ensuring accountability while allowing uninterrupted emergency care.

Reimbursement to hospitals will be made through the Motor Vehicle Accident Fund (MVAFF). In cases where the offending vehicle is insured, payment will be drawn from contributions made by General Insurance Companies. In uninsured and Hit & Run cases, payment will be made through budgetary allocation by Government of India. Claims approved by the State Health Agency will be paid within 10 days, thereby providing financial certainty to hospitals and encouraging uninterrupted treatment.

Grievances of road accident victims will be addressed by a Grievance Redressal Officer nominated by the District Road Safety Committee chaired by the District Collector / District Magistrate / Deputy Commissioner, ensuring accountability at the district level.

The approval and launch of PMRAHAT from Seva Teerth symbolizes a citizen-first approach – where governance translates into timely action, compassionate response, and protection of life. By ensuring that no accident victim is denied life-saving treatment due to financial constraints, PM RAHAT marks a decisive step towards saving lives of road accident victims and strengthening India's emergency care ecosystem.

**Kathua Seals.....**

Sanhita, empowering executive magistrates to take urgent preventive measures to maintain public order and safety.

Citing a sensitive security situation and the possibility of cross-border firing, the district administration said the restrictions are necessary to ensure the safety of residents living in vulnerable border villages and to prevent any anti-national activities.

As per the order, movement has been restricted in a five-kilometre strip from the IB falling under the area of responsibility of the BSF unit, stretching from BOP Paharpur to BOP Karol Krishna.

In addition, the administration has prohibited the movement of heavy vehicles – including trucks, tippers and multi-axle vehicles – on the old Samba-Kathua road between 9 pm and 6 am.

The restrictions came into force on February 14 and will remain effective for 60 days unless withdrawn earlier. Violators will face action under Section 223 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita.

Speaking to reporters, Sharma clarified that the directive is a continuation of earlier restrictions, with the key change being the expansion of the restricted zone from two kilometres to five kilometres along the IB.

"The earlier order expired today, and accordingly a revised order has been issued with certain changes," he said.

**Tech-Driven.....**

Agriculture: My Produce-My Price," is being held at the Shalimar Campus of Sher-e-Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology of Kashmir (SKUAST-K). It aims to strengthen entrepreneurship, sustainability and market linkages in the Union Territory's agriculture sector.

Addressing a large gathering of farmers, agri-entrepreneurs, researchers and students, the Chief Minister stressed that Jammu and Kashmir must enhance both the quality and quantity of its agricultural output to compete in global markets. He underlined the importance of technology-based interventions, organic farming, branding, value addition and efficient market access to ensure better returns for growers.

"Technology, innovation and start-ups will define the future of agriculture in Jammu and Kashmir," he said, highlighting the growing role of young entrepreneurs and research institutions in modernising traditional farming practices.

The inaugural function was attended by Minister Sakina Itoo, Minister Javid Ahmad Dar and senior officials, including representatives from Government Medical College Srinagar. Vice Chancellor Prof. Nazir Ahmad Ganai and other faculty members of SKUAST-K were also present.

After inaugurating the mela, the Chief Minister visited more than 100 stalls set up by start-ups, agripreneurs and research institutions. The exhibits showcased cutting-edge technologies such as smart irrigation systems, precision farm machinery, organic inputs and value-added agricultural products. He interacted with innovators and enquired about their enterprises, scalability and market outreach.

Praising the role of Sher-e-Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology of Kashmir and Sher-e-Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology of Jammu, the Chief Minister said both institutions have made significant contributions to research, extension services and farmer empowerment, helping reshape the region's agrarian landscape.

He noted that platforms like GON'GUL serve as a vital bridge between farmers and experts, fostering knowledge exchange, innovation adoption and new market opportunities.

With participation from farmers, agri-business firms, researchers and youth innovators across the Valley, GON'GUL-2026 is expected to emerge as a key platform in charting the roadmap for next-generation agriculture in Jammu and Kashmir.

**Omar Abdullah.....**

Bangladesh would work towards strengthening relations with India, underlining that peace and stability in the neighbourhood are in the collective interest of the region.

Speaking to reporters after inaugurating the annual agritech festival 'GONGUL' at Sher-e-Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology (SKUAST) in Srinagar, the Chief Minister said India benefits from having stable and prosperous neighbouring countries.

"The more stable our neighbouring countries are, the more it benefits us. We all want peace, progress and stronger ties in the region," Abdullah said, adding that India supports democracy and development in Bangladesh. He expressed optimism that bilateral relations would continue to improve in the coming months.

On the proposed India-US trade agreement, Abdullah said it is important to carefully assess its implications for Jammu and Kashmir, particularly the horticulture sector, which forms the backbone of the Union Territory's rural economy.

He noted that products such as apples, almonds, walnuts and other fresh and dry fruits – key strengths of J&K – may face increased competition if similar items enter the market at lower duties.

"Our growers have worked hard over the years to improve quality, introduce new varieties and invest in modern storage facilities. It is important that their interests are safeguarded as the country moves towards expanding global trade," he said.

The Chief Minister emphasised that greater competition also presents an opportunity to further enhance productivity and quality standards.

"If we are entering a phase where we compete with advanced agricultural economies like the United States, then we must strengthen our own systems. With better technology, improved practices and support to farmers, we can hold our ground," he said.

Abdullah added that the UT government, in collaboration with agricultural universities, is promoting technology-driven and organic farming solutions to empower farmers and boost the rural economy.

He described the GONGUL festival as a platform to connect farmers with innovation, saying such initiatives will play a key role in preparing Jammu and Kashmir's agriculture sector for future challenges and opportunities.

**Posters of Wanted.....**

search operations to prevent any terror activity. A search operation has been underway for the past four days in the Thathri area of Doda, launched promptly after receiving information about suspicious movements.

Authorities have also appealed to the public to inform police before renting out houses or shops, stressing that proper verification is essential to maintain security and prevent misuse of rented premises.

The posters have been displayed at key checkpoints and public places, including Nagri, Dessa, Ganpat Bridge at the Doda entry point and Thathri. Officials said more such notices will be put up in other vulnerable areas to maximise outreach.

The move comes amid intensified counter-terror operations in the high-altitude areas of the Jammu region following recent encounters and intelligence reports about the presence of militants. The poster campaign forms part of a broader effort to dismantle terror networks operating in the Chenab Valley, including Doda and Kishtwar districts, which have witnessed renewed militant activity in recent years.

Meanwhile, security forces on Saturday busted a terrorist hideout in the Chilli forest area of Gandoh in Doda district, recovering eatables and blankets. Officials said the recovery points to recent movement in the area, prompting further combing operations in surrounding forest belts.

Over the past month, massive search operations have been carried out across Doda, Kishtwar, Kathua, Udhampur, Rajouri and Poonch districts, leading to nearly a dozen encounters. Four Pakistani JeM terrorists and an Army soldier have been killed in these operations, officials said.

Searches have been further intensified in Thathri and Gandoh following reports from locals about suspicious movement of persons believed to have escaped recent cordon-and-search operations in Kishtwar and shifted towards adjoining forest areas.

**LG, CM, Cabinet.....**

The sacred festival, celebrated as 'Herath' by Kashmiri Pandit community, is a symbol of our spiritual tradition and communal harmony. Mahashivratri holds a place of profound significance in our life. The holy festival provides opportunity to pause and reflect the timeless virtues Lord Shiva exemplifies. The teaching Lord Shiva embodies is one of universal service. The holy festival reminds us that each person carries the responsibility to contribute to humanity's wellbeing in the ways uniquely available to them. May Lord Shiva continue to shower his divine blessings upon us. May this festival strengthen the bonds of brotherhood for years to come. Har Har Mahadev!'

Chief Minister Omar Abdullah also extended his warm greetings to the people of Jammu and Kashmir on the auspicious occasion of Mahashivratri.

In his message, the Chief Minister said that Mahashivratri is a sacred festival symbolising devotion, faith and spiritual awakening, and it inspires people to follow the path of righteousness, harmony and compassion.

"On the blessed occasion of Mahashivratri, I convey my heartfelt greetings and best wishes to all. May this sacred occasion bring peace, happiness and prosperity to every household," the Chief Minister said.

The Chief Minister also prayed for strengthening the bonds of brotherhood, unity and communal harmony in Jammu and Kashmir, and wished that the festival may usher in progress and well-being for all.

Deputy Chief Minister, Surinder Choudhary extended his warm greetings to the people on the auspicious occasion of Maha Shivratri.

In his message, he said the festival holds immense religious significance and is celebrated with deep devotion, fervour and gaiety across Jammu and Kashmir.

Conveying his heartfelt wishes, the Deputy Chief Minister prayed for peace, prosperity and well-being of all, and emphasized the importance of love, unity and mutual respect among the people.

He urged everyone to imbibe the teachings of Lord Shiva and spread the message of harmony and brotherhood, asserting that Jammu and Kashmir has always stood for communal amity and togetherness.

Minister for Agriculture Production, Rural Development and Panchayati Raj, Cooperative and Election Department, Javid Ahmad Dar, has also extended his warm greetings to the people.

In his message, the Minister conveyed

heartfelt wishes to all citizens, especially the Kashmiri Pandit community, celebrating the sacred festival of Maha Shivaratri, locally known as Herath. He said that this auspicious occasion symbolizes devotion, faith, harmony and the triumph of righteousness.

Javid Dar expressed hope that the festival would usher in peace, prosperity and happiness for every household across the Union Territory. He emphasized that such festivals strengthen the bonds of brotherhood, communal harmony and mutual respect among diverse communities of Jammu and Kashmir.

The Minister further prayed for the well-being of the people and reiterated the government's commitment towards inclusive development, rural prosperity, agricultural growth and strengthening grassroots democratic institutions.

He urged people to celebrate the occasion with traditional fervor while upholding the values of unity, compassion and social harmony.

Minister for Health and Medical Education, Social Welfare and Education, Sakeena Itoo extended her warm greetings to the people.

In her greetings, the Minister said that Mahashivratri is a sacred festival and reflects the region's centuries-old tradition of spiritual coexistence and mutual respect among diverse communities.

"On this holy occasion of Mahashivratri, I extend my heartfelt greetings to all, particularly to our Kashmiri Pandit brothers and sisters. Herath Poshte! May this auspicious day bring renewed hope, happiness and well-being to every household," the Minister said.

Minister Sakeena added that such festivals provide an opportunity to strengthen the bonds of brotherhood and reinforce the spirit of unity that has long been the hallmark of Jammu and Kashmir's composite culture.

The Minister also prayed for progress, prosperity and well being of the people of entire Jammu and Kashmir.

Minister for Food, Civil Supplies & Consumer Affairs, Information Technology, Youth Services and Sports, and Science and Technology, Satish Sharma extended his heartfelt greetings to the people of Jammu and Kashmir.

In his message, the Minister said that Mahashivratri holds profound spiritual significance and reflects the timeless values of devotion, self-reflection and inner strength. He noted that the sacred festival encourages people to embrace purity of thought, compassion and harmony in their lives.

Conveying his best wishes, the Minister expressed hope that the divine blessings of Lord Shiva bring peace, good health and prosperity to all families and inspire renewed hope and positivity in society.

Satish Sharma also prayed for lasting peace, unity and mutual respect among all communities, expressing confidence that the festival will further strengthen the spirit of togetherness and shared progress across the region.

He wished that the auspicious occasion brings happiness and spiritual enrichment to every home and contributes to the overall well-being and prosperity of the people.

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# Div Com Kashmir reviews SANJY-2026 arrangements

Emphasizes optimal utilization of released funds to augment facilities for pilgrims

HT NEWS NETWORK

**SRINAGAR, FEB 14:** To ensure a smooth and spiritually fulfilling pilgrimage of Yatris during SANJY-2026, Divisional Commissioner Kashmir, Anshul Garg today chaired a comprehensive review meeting to review arrangements at base camps along the route to the Holy Cave. On the occasion, The Div Com issued slew of instructions for advance preparations for forthcoming annual Shri Amarnathji Yatra. The Divisional Commissioner emphasized optimal utilization of already released funds to augment facilities for pilgrims. He instructed departments to submit detailed action plans for SANJY-2026, float tenders in advance, complete works within stipulated timelines and prepare realistic and practical cost estimates. Highlighting the role of the Tourism Department as the nodal agency for the SANJY, he directed it to ensure accountability among stakeholder departments.

To facilitate registration of pilgrims, the Divisional Commissioner instructed concerned authorities to increase staff deployment at RFID registration counters. He further directed the Animal Husbandry and Labour Departments to work in coordination for RFID tagging of service providers and ponies. BEACON was instructed to install crash barriers along the Pahalgam-Chandanwari stretch and the Baltal route, and to construct shelter sheds for security forces along the axes. During the meeting, he also reviewed operationalization of control rooms including ICC and circulation of mitigation plans among agencies. Also, he instructed for capacity augmentation of camps and installation of headcount cameras at designated parking areas. To ensure seamless movement of SRTC buses during SANJY-2026, Police authorities were directed to facilitate smooth circulation of buses after deboarding of



yatrics. The Divisional Commissioner also reviewed the progress of works undertaken by R&B, PHE and KPDC and emphasized adherence to timelines. He also reviewed arrangements for supply of essential items, including

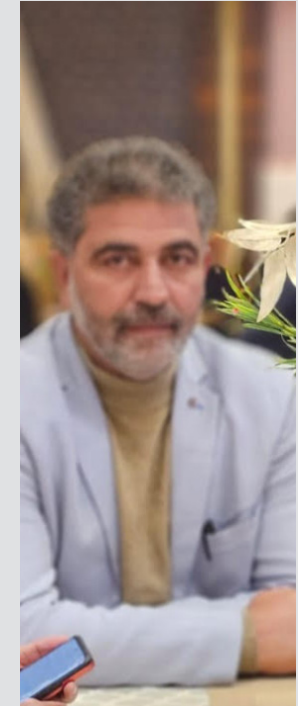
ration and firewood, to the yatra camps. During the meeting, special focus was laid on sanitation along the camps and routes, stationing of fire tenders at strategic locations, installation of signages and display screens, and expansion of telecom coverage in shadow areas by communication agencies. The meeting underscored the administration's commitment to advance planning, inter-departmental coordination and augmentation of services to ensure a safe, efficient and well-managed pilgrimage during SANJY-2026. The meeting was attended by the Commissioner SMC, Deputy Commissioners of Ganderbal and Bandipora; concerned SSPs, Additional Deputy Commissioners of Anantnag, Srinagar, and Budgam; and officers from FCS&CA, SRTC, Tourism, ULB, RDD, Rural Sanitation, Information, KPDC, R&B, PHE, NHIDCL, NHAI, Labour, Animal Husbandry, as well as representatives from Jio, Airtel, BSNL, and G-Max.

## Galandar Residents Await Inclusion in Block Pampore; 241 Families Caught in Administrative Limbo

Lateef Bhat Flags 'Two Decades of Neglect', Seeks DC's Intervention

HT NEWS NETWORK

**PAMPORE, FEB 14:** Senior BJP leader and former district president Pulwama, Mohammad Lateef Bhat, has alleged that 241 families residing in a hamlet adjacent to Patalbagh in Galandar, Pampore, are suffering due to prolonged administrative neglect and jurisdictional ambiguity. Addressing the media, Bhat said the residents have been caught between municipal and rural authorities for years, depriving them of basic development and civic amenities. Citing official correspondence, Bhat stated that despite a formal communication from the Office of the Tehsildar Pampore to the Assistant Commissioner Revenue Pulwama, the demand for inclusion of the locality in Block Pampore remains pending. "The people have submitted repeated representations, yet no decisive action has been taken," he said. According to Bhat, Kadlabal C (Part No. 55) has 695 registered voters, of whom 141 have formally sought inclusion of Galandar Pampore under Block Pampore through the Rural Development Department. He pointed out that as per SRO 45 dated February 18,



2003, Ward No. 17 covers only Molvi Mohalla and Litterbal New Colony, and the affected settlement does not fall within the notified limits of the Municipal Committee Pampore. Quoting reports from the Block Development Officer Pampore, Bhat said that although the residents are enrolled in the municipal electoral roll and have even elected a municipal representative in the past, no developmental works have been carried out by the Rural Development Department since the area does not fall under any panchayat jurisdiction. "This is a classic case of administrative vacuum where people are denied services because of boundary confusion," he remarked. Calling it "two decades of systematic neglect," Bhat urged Deputy Commissioner Pulwama Dr. Basharat Qayoom to personally intervene and ensure the immediate inclusion of the locality in Block Pampore so that long-delayed development works can finally be undertaken.

## Through Frost and Fog, Education Lights the Way in Kupwara

JAVOID BHAT

**KUPWARA, FEB 14:** Even as harsh winter conditions continue to grip the district, students across Kupwara are vehemently participating in Winter Tutorial Centres, transforming the season of chill into a period of academic dedication, discipline, and renewed hope. These centres have emerged as a significant educational intervention, ensuring that the learning process remains uninterrupted during the prolonged winter break. At present, many Winter Tutorial Centres are functional across the district, catering to a huge enrolment of students from different classes and backgrounds. The overwhelming response reflects the growing awareness among students and parents about the importance of sustained academic engagement, even during adverse climatic conditions. Under the dynamic and proactive leadership of Chief Education Officer Kupwara, Mr. Manzoor Ahmad Najar, a systematic, transparent, and well-coordinated monitoring mechanism has been put in place. Regular inspections, continuous academic supervision, timely feedback, and close coordination with field-level functionaries have ensured that these centres function efficiently and remain focused on quality teaching and learning outcomes. Despite biting cold and challenging weather, students are attending classes with remarkable enthusiasm and regularity, demonstrating a strong



resolve to strengthen their academic foundations. Teachers, on their part, are extending full cooperation, dedicating extra time and effort to revision work, concept clarification, and addressing individual learning gaps. Parents have expressed complete satisfaction with the initiative, lauding the education department for providing a constructive and structured academic platform during the winter months. Many parents believe that these tutorials will play a crucial role in bridging learning gaps and significantly improving student performance in forthcoming examinations. The Winter Tutorial Programme in Kupwara stands as a fine example of educational resilience and administrative commitment, proving that with sincere leadership, dedicated teachers, motivated students, and supportive parents, even the coldest months can be transformed into a season of learning and progress, truly breaking the chill for a brighter future.

## Four Youths Booked for Triple Riding and Helmet Violation in Lal Chowk; Traffic Police Intensify Road Safety Drive

FAROOQ RATHER

**ANANTNAG, FEB 14:** Acting on a complaint received regarding blatant violation of traffic norms, the Traffic Police Anantnag took swift action against four youths who were found riding a single scooter without helmets in the busy Lal Chowk area, in clear contravention of the provisions of the Motor Vehicles Act, 1988. According to officials, the scooter bearing registration number JK03M-8619 was spotted roaming in Lal Chowk with four persons riding simultaneously, none of whom were wearing protective helmets. The act not only violated statutory traffic regulations but also posed a serious threat to the safety of the riders as well as other road users in the con-

gested marketplace. Taking cognizance of the complaint, teams under the supervision of SSP Traffic Rural Kashmir Ravinder Pal Singh launched an immediate inquiry. The operation was led by DySP Traffic Mohd Aslam (JKPS) and DTI Javid, who successfully traced the violators after verification and ground-level checking. Following due procedure, legal action under the relevant sections of the Motor Vehicles Act, 1988 was initiated against the offenders. Officials stated that the violations included triple riding (with four persons on a two-wheeler) and riding without helmets, both of which are punishable offences under the law. In addition to imposing legal penalties, the Traffic Police also sum-

moned the boys along with their parents for counselling. During the session, officers sensitized them about the importance of adhering to traffic rules and regulations, emphasizing that such reckless behavior could lead to fatal consequences. The families were advised to ensure that such violations are not repeated in the future. Traffic authorities reiterated that this action forms part of the ongoing enforcement and awareness campaign being carried out by Traffic Rural Kashmir to promote responsible driving habits and ensure road safety as a top priority. Officials have urged the public, especially young riders, to strictly follow traffic norms, wear helmets, and avoid overloading two-wheelers to prevent accidents and safeguard lives.

## Annual "Mehfil-e-Noor" in Shalina Budgam on the Auspicious Occasion of Ayyad-e-Sha'bania

GULFAM BARI

**SRINAGAR, FEB 14:** Inder Cultural Forum Sumbal in collaboration with Al-Zehra Trust Shalina organized a dignified and spiritually uplifting annual Mehfil-e-Noor at Shalina Budgam in connection with the sacred month of Sha'ban and the auspicious celebrations of Ayyad-e-Sha'bania. The event commenced with the recitation of the Holy Qur'an, followed by a soulful rendition of Naat. President of Inder Cultural Forum, Mr. Saleem Yousuf, formally welcomed the guests and participants. The gathering was presided over by Hujjat-ul-Islam wal-Muslimeen Aga Syed Mujtaba Abbas Al-Moosavi Al-Safavi. Prominent religious scholars including Maulana Ghulam Mohammad Gulzar and Maulana Mohammad Abbas Matoo were also present on the dais along with other distinguished guests. Speakers highlighted the spiritual significance and virtues of the blessed month of Sha'ban, shedding light on



its teachings and the importance of moral and social reform in contemporary society. Several noted poets from across the Valley participated in the Mehfil and presented devotional poetry, adding to the spiritual ambiance of the program. A large number of devotees and community members attended the mehfil. The programme concluded with a vote of thanks delivered by Maulana Ghulam Mohammad Gulzar. The proceedings were conducted by Mir Rafiq and Syed Rizwan. The organizers expressed gratitude to all participants and reaffirmed their commitment to promoting religious awareness and cultural harmony through such events.

## BRO Restores Bharderwah-Bani-Basohli Highway After Heavy Snowfall, Public Hails Swift Action

AMIR IQBAL KHAN

**BHARDARWAH, FEB 14:** The 118 RCC of the Border Roads Organisation on Friday reopened the strategic Bharderwah-Bani-Basohli road for traffic after clearing massive snow accumulation at Chattergala Pass, restoring vital connectivity between the mountainous regions. Officials said heavy snowfall had snapped the link between Bani and Bharderwah in recent days prompting an intensive clearance operation led by 118 RCC personnel under the supervision of Commander 35 BRTF Udhampur, S.K. Singh. Despite harsh weather, deep snow and difficult terrain near the Ashapati (Sonbain) glacier and Kailash mountain foothills, the BRO team reopened the road well ahead of its usual seasonal schedule ensuring movement of essential vehicles and local commuters, officials added. They said snow clearance was carried out alongside ongoing bridge construction and permanent



infrastructure works reflecting the agency's continued push to maintain all-weather connectivity in remote Himalayan belts. While bus services have yet to begin, Sumos, tempo travellers and private vehicles are now plying safely along the 84-km stretch connecting the regions. Officer Commanding 118 RCC Jivitesh Rozora said the rapid restoration aimed to guarantee uninterrupted traffic flow and public safety in challenging terrain was done within the shortest possible timeframe. Meanwhile, senior Bharatiya Janata Party leader Ramnik Manhas criticised the Public Works

Department for failing to reopen the Bharderwah-Chamba road urging the administration to hand the road over to the GREF/BRO for smoother traffic management. He said tourist inflow to Bharderwah had crossed three lakh last year crediting BRO's infrastructure efforts for improved accessibility and regional development. Residents across Bharderwah expressed gratitude to Commander S.K. Singh and the 118 RCC team for restoring the crucial road nearly two months ahead of schedule, calling the move a major relief for commuters and businesses in the snowbound region.

# DC Bandipora chairs meeting on Solid Waste Management under Swachh Bharat Mission

HT NEWS NETWORK

**BANDIPORA, FEBRUARY 14:** Deputy Commissioner Bandipora, Indu Kanwal Chib, today chaired a meeting to review and deliberate upon the implementation of Solid Waste Management under the Swachh Bharat Mission Abhiyan.

During the meeting, detailed deliberations were held on strengthening waste management mechanisms across the district in both urban and rural areas. It was observed that while rural areas face relatively loose infrastructure, urban areas comprise a higher concentration of households, requiring a more structured and intensive approach.

The Deputy Commissioner emphasized that the basic objective of solid waste management is environmental protection and sustainable development. She underlined that primary source segregation remains the core focus and must be ensured at the household level. The meeting discussed the complete cycle of waste management, including waste generation, transportation, and processing.

It was informed that a Sewage



Treatment Plant (STP) and a Material Recovery Facility (MRF) have been established in the district to facilitate scientific processing and disposal of waste. The policy framework and relevant legal provisions governing solid waste management were also discussed in detail.

The roles and responsibilities

of waste generators, Municipal Councils, and other stakeholders were also discussed, and it was noted that strict action shall be taken in cases of non-compliance.

The Deputy Commissioner further expressed that the administration intends to commence a comprehensive

initiative from April, aimed at intensifying public participation in solid waste management. She directed all concerned departments to make necessary preparations in advance, including the formulation of structured action plans and awareness modules, so that the initiative is launched in a systematic and

result-oriented manner across both urban and rural areas of the district.

The Deputy Commissioner directed strict enforcement of a complete ban on polythene bags and stressed the need to ensure the use of cloth bags as an environmentally responsible alternative.

The Deputy Commissioner called for coordinated efforts among all departments to ensure effective implementation of the Swachh Bharat Mission in letter and spirit, reiterating the administration's commitment to achieving sustainable waste management practices across the district.

The meeting was attended by Regional Director Kashmir, JKPCB; Assistant Commissioner Development Bandipora; Chief Planning Officer; Assistant Commissioner Panchayat Bandipora; Chief Executive Officer, Municipal Council Bandipora; Assistant Controller, Legal Metrology Bandipora; District Officer, Pollution Control Board Bandipora; EO MC Hajin and Sumbal; Representative of ULB Kashmir, besides other concerned officers.

## Arrangements for ensuing holy month of Ramzan and Mahashivratri reviewed at Handwara

HT NEWS NETWORK

**KUPWARA, FEBRUARY 14:** In order to ensure smooth and peaceful observance of the forthcoming holy month of Ramzan 2026 and Maha Shivaratri, the Additional Deputy Commissioner, (ADC), Handwara, Javed Naseem Masoodi, today chaired a comprehensive review meeting at the ADC office chamber in Handwara.

The meeting focused on streamlining arrangements to guarantee uninterrupted essential services and adequate security measures during the significant religious occasions.



The Power Development Department (PDD) and Public Health Engineering (PHE) were directed to ensure uninterrupted electricity and water supply, particularly during Sehri and Iftar hours in Ramzan, and at temples during Mahashivratri. Emphasis was laid on prompt redressal of any service disruptions.

To curb hoarding, profiteering, and the sale of sub-standard food items, Tehsildars, Police, and the Civil Supplies Department were instructed to conduct regular market inspections. The President of the Traders Federation was urged to ensure adequate availability of essential commodities at government-approved rates.

The Municipal Committees of Handwara and Langate have been tasked with undertaking intensive sanitation drives around mosques and other religious places to maintain cleanliness and hygiene.

The Deputy Superintendent of Police briefed the chair on security arrangements and traffic management plans to facilitate smooth movement of devotees and prevent any untoward incidents.

The ADC emphasized close coordination among all concerned departments to uphold the sanctity of the festivals and ensure a hassle-free environment for the general public.

The meeting was attended by the Deputy Superintendent of Police Handwara, Executive Engineers of PHE and PDD, Tehsildars of Sub-Division Handwara, officials from Civil Supplies and TSOs, representatives of Municipal Committees Handwara and Langate, and the President of Traders Federation Handwara.

## DC Bandipora conducts spot review of arrangements at Shadipora Transit Camp for SANJY-2026

HT NEWS NETWORK

**BANDIPORA, FEBRUARY 14:** Deputy Commissioner (DC) Bandipora, Indu Kanwal Chib, today conducted a spot inspection of arrangements at Shadipora Transit Camp in preparation for the upcoming Shri Amarnath Ji Yatra (SANJY) 2026.



During the visit, the Deputy Commissioner took a first-hand assessment of the infrastructure, facilities, and essential services being developed at the transit camp for the convenience of Yatis proceeding towards the holy cave via the Baltal route. She reviewed the pace and quality of ongoing works and inspected various arrangements finalized for the smooth and efficient conduct of the Yatra.

Emphasizing timely completion of all preparatory measures, the DC stressed the importance of ensuring a safe, comfortable, and hassle-free experience for the pilgrims. She directed the concerned departments to work in close coordination and maintain high standards of sanitation, potable water supply, uninterrupted power, accommodation, medical facilities, and other essential services at the transit camp.

## DC Ganderbal chairs meeting of District Level Telecom Committee, reviews Telecom Infrastructure & public grievances

HT NEWS NETWORK

**GANDERBAL, FEBRUARY 14:** Deputy Commissioner (DC) Ganderbal, Jatin Kishore, who is also chairman of District Level Telecom Committee (DLTC) convened a meeting here today to review the progress of telecom infrastructure projects and address issues related to mobile connectivity and public grievances in the district.

During the meeting, threadbare discussions were held on BSNL 4G saturation and its physical status, pending Right of Way (RoW) cases, and progress under BharatNet and other connectivity initiatives.

The meeting was informed that out of total Tower installation sites, most of the towers are on air while work on remaining is ongoing and expected to be completed soon.



It was informed that several RoW applications have been received, and the concerned departments were directed to ensure that No Objection Certificates (NOCs) are issued within the stipulated timeframe to avoid any delays.

The DC emphasized the need for close coordination among line departments for early resolution of pending cases.

The Committee also reviewed the progress of BharatNet projects. It was further informed that works at few locations have been completed, while

the remaining are at various stages of execution.

The DC directed the executing agencies to accelerate the pace of work, especially in areas where tendering formalities have already been completed.

The DC stressed that strengthening telecom infrastructure is vital for public service delivery, emergency response, and overall socio-economic development of the district. All stakeholders were directed to work in synergy to ensure seamless mobile connectivity across Ganderbal.

Among others, the meeting was attended by Additional Deputy Commissioner, Superintending Engineer PWD, Assistant Commissioner Development, other officers and officials besides representatives from BSNL, Jio and other operators.

## DC Bandipora Conducts Comprehensive Review of District CAPEX Budget 2025-26, Emphasizes Timely Execution of Development Projects and Efficient Resource Utilization

Stresses timely execution and accountability

HT NEWS NETWORK

**BANDIPORA, FEB 14:** Deputy Commissioner (DC) Bandipora, Indu Kanwal Chib, today chaired a comprehensive review meeting to assess the financial and physical progress under the District CAPEX Budget 2025-26 (UT Component) and other key funding components, including SASCI, CDF, MPLADS, DDC/BDC Grants, PRI Grants, Aspirational Block Development Programme, and Flood Relief Works.

During the meeting, the DC undertook a detailed review of the Financial and Physical Progress Report under the District CAPEX Budget 2025-26 and examined department-wise expenditure and progress achieved so far. She emphasized the need for timely completion of works, optimal utilization of funds, and strict adherence to quality standards in all ongoing and upcoming projects.

A comprehensive assessment was conducted of works and expenditure under the District CAPEX Budget 2025-26, including Constituency Development Fund (CDF) allocations for Sonawari, Bandipora, and Gurez; MPLADS; DDC Grants; BDC Grants; PRI Grants; the Aspirational Block Development Programme; and Flood Relief Works. The DC stressed that public funds must translate into tangible and visible developmental outcomes on the ground.

The Deputy Commissioner reviewed sectors where progress requires further acceleration and directed the concerned departments to take proactive measures to expedite implementation. She emphasized that timely completion of works remains a priority and instructed officers to address bottlenecks through effective planning and close monitoring.

The DC also noted that certain works, including concrete laying



in Gurez, had been impacted due to prevailing weather conditions and advised departments to plan in advance to ensure smooth and timely execution once conditions improve.

During the review, it was observed that expenditure under certain departments required improvement. The Deputy Commissioner strictly directed JAKEDA and Ground Water Department (GWD) to ensure the desired level of expenditure within the stipulated timeframe, as progress under these departments was found to be lagging. She instructed the concerned officers

to take immediate corrective steps and expedite implementation to meet targets.

Highlighting the importance of financial discipline, the DC directed officers to hold regular review meetings at their respective levels to improve expenditure and accelerate the pace of works. She underlined that continuous follow-up and close monitoring are essential to achieve targets within stipulated timelines.

The Deputy Commissioner also stressed the need for enhanced inter-departmental coordination, particularly in the implementation of replacement plans and execution of works under DDC and BDC Grants. She directed that coordination meetings be convened to ensure smooth implementation of development plans.

During the review, the performance of various departments was assessed. The DC sought improvement in areas

where progress was found below expectations and directed immediate corrective measures.

The Deputy Commissioner further instructed officers to conduct regular site visits to ensure quality, transparency, and accountability in the execution of works.

The meeting was attended by Superintending Engineer R&B Circle Bandipora; Assistant Commissioner Development Bandipora; Assistant Commissioner Panchayat Bandipora; Chief Planning Officer Bandipora; Chief Education Officer Bandipora; Chief Agriculture Officer Bandipora; District Sheep Husbandry Officer Bandipora; Executive Engineers; District Youth Services and Sports Officer Bandipora; Assistant Director Handicrafts Bandipora; Block Development Officers; and Chief Executive Officer, Municipal Committee Bandipora, besides other concerned officers.

## DC Pulwama Reviews Comprehensive Ramadan Arrangements, Directs Departments to Ensure Smooth Essential Services, Market Regulation, and Public Convenience

Emphasises uninterrupted essential services, market regulation and public convenience

HT NEWS NETWORK

**PULWAMA, FEBRUARY 14:** Deputy Commissioner Pulwama, Dr. Basharat Qayoom, today chaired a meeting at the Administrative Complex Pulwama to review and finalise arrangements aimed at facilitating the smooth observance of the Holy month of Ramadan.

Addressing the meeting, the DC highlighted the need for coordinated and comprehensive measures to ensure public convenience throughout the holy month. He stated that it is the responsibility of all officers to ensure seamless delivery of essential services and prompt grievance redressal during Ramadan. During the meeting,

The DC laid special emphasis on ensuring uninterrupted power supply during the peak hours of Sehri and Iftar. He sought a detailed action plan from the KPDCI to ensure zero curtailment during these hours and directed that distribution transformers, in case of any damage, be replaced on the same day to avoid inconvenience to the public.

Dr. Qayoom also reviewed the status of water supply schemes across the district. He was informed that all schemes are fully functional and that water tankers have been kept in readiness to meet any exigency. The DC directed the Jal Shakti Department to ensure regular monitoring of supply and immediate response to any

disruption. Calling market inspections critical during the holy month, he directed that joint teams comprising Revenue, Food Safety, Municipality, CAPD, Legal Metrology and Police shall carry out daily inspections in major markets with focus on quality adherence, prevention of overpricing and safeguarding consumer rights. He further

directed the concerned authorities to submit daily reports regarding the status of inspection drives conducted.

Taking note of traffic congestion during peak hours, the DC directed the concerned authorities to put in place a comprehensive traffic management plan to ensure smooth vehicular movement,

particularly around busy markets and mosques. He also directed the ARTO to prepare a roster to ensure availability of sufficient public transport in critical areas, especially during peak hours.

The DC also sought details regarding the availability of essential commodities including food grains, LPG, mutton and poultry.

# Satish Sharma reviews border infrastructure development with BRO Chief

Calls for special focus on Chhamb Constituency

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

**JAMMU, FEBRUARY 14:** Minister for Food, Civil Supplies & Consumer Affairs, Information Technology, Transport, Youth Services and Sports, Science and Technology, ARI and Trainings, Satish Sharma, today met R K Mishra, Chief of Border Roads Organisation (BRO), and held comprehensive discussion on key developmental priorities in border regions, with particular focus on Chhamb Constituency.

The meeting centred on strengthening the infrastructure and improving connectivity in strategically important border belts to accelerate socio-economic growth and enhance public service delivery.

The Minister underscored the need for sustained and coordinated efforts to ensure timely execution of road construction, upgradation and maintenance works in remote and sensitive areas.

Emphasising the strategic and developmental importance of border constituencies, the Minister said that robust road infrastructure plays a critical role not only in ensuring mobility but also in improving access to essential services such as healthcare, education, emergency response and supply of essential commodities. He highlighted that better connectivity is fundamental to empower the local communities, promote economic opportunities



During the interaction, detailed deliberation was held on the status and strengthening overall regional resilience.

of ongoing projects, identification of priority stretches requiring immediate attention and formulation of a time-bound roadmap for future infrastructure initiatives.

The Minister stressed the importance of adopting modern engineering practices, maintaining quality standards and expediting project timelines to deliver tangible benefits to the people at the earliest.

The BRO Chief briefed the Minister on the progress of various infrastructure works currently underway in the region. He also outlined the upcoming plans aimed at further strengthening the connectivity and enhancing the durability of road networks in border areas. He reiterated the organisation's commitment towards supporting the developmental initiatives and assured full cooperation in fast-tracking priority projects.

Reaffirming the government's commitment to balanced and inclusive development, the Minister stated that special focus will continue to be accorded to border constituencies to bridge infrastructure gaps and improve the quality of life of residents living in far-flung areas. He emphasised that coordinated institutional efforts and regular monitoring will remain key to ensuring efficient implementation of development initiatives.

# Pulwama Martyrs Day observed with solemn tribute at Town Hall Doda

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

**DODA, FEBRUARY 14:** Pulwama Martyrs Day was observed with solemnity and patriotic fervour at Town Hall, Doda, where the District Administration, in collaboration with the NGO Tejass Ek Pahal Foundation, civil society members, students and citizens, paid heartfelt tributes to the brave martyrs who laid down their lives in the service of the nation. The programme was organised by Tejass Ek Pahal Foundation under the guidance of Deputy Commissioner Doda Harvinder Singh and the supervision of NGO Chairman Akash Parihar. The event was led by District Development Council (DDC) Chairman Dhananter Singh Kotwal, DDC Doda Harvinder Singh, SSP Doda Sandeep Kumar Mehta, DDC Vice Chairperson Sangeeta Rani, Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC) Doda Din Mohd Afaqi and Chief Education Officer (CEO) Doda Bhushan Kumar Pathak. The dignitaries paid tributes to the martyrs by lighting traditional lamps, laying floral wreaths and observing a two-minute silence.

Students and participants presented patriotic songs, speeches and cultural performances, remembering the supreme sacrifice of the martyrs and reaffirming their commitment to the nation. The programme witnessed enthusiastic participation from students of various government and private schools, volunteers and citizens. Addressing the gathering, the dignitaries underscored the importance of patriotism, unity, discipline and national integrity. They urged the youth to draw inspiration from the courage, dedication and selfless service of the martyrs and to contribute positively towards nation-building, social harmony and community welfare.

As part of the observance, a students' rally was organised, commencing from Town Hall Doda and passing through Tondwah, Clock Tower and the DC Office Doda before culminating back at the Town Hall. Participants carried placards and raised patriotic slogans to honour the martyrs and spread messages of unity, peace and responsibility. Speaking on the occasion, CEO Doda Bhushan Kumar Pathak paid tribute to the martyrs and delivered an address urging students to actively promote awareness about the Nasha Mukta Bharat Abhiyan. He encouraged everyone to participate in the e-pledge campaign against drug abuse. SSP Doda Sandeep Kumar Mehta lauded the efforts of the organisers and paid homage to the martyrs and their families. He urged citizens, especially the youth, to perform their fundamental duties with honesty, integrity and dedication.

Deputy Commissioner Doda Harvinder Singh appreciated the role of the NGO in organising the observance. He highlighted that the country's unity and integrity have played a vital role in preserving a strong India. He also expressed condolences over the recent loss of soldiers in road accidents in Bhandarwah and informed that the Indian Army is organising a Snow Marathon as a tribute to the fallen soldiers. He urged the people to work collectively for the development of the nation.

The Chief Guest, DDC Chairman Dhananter Singh Kotwal, delivered a patriotic address, paying tributes to the martyrs. He appreciated the leadership of the Prime Minister in making the nation proud globally. He urged people to honour the sacrifices of the martyrs and paid homage to all those who lost their lives during militancy-related incidents. He further called upon citizens to safeguard youth from the menace of drug abuse and contribute to environmental conservation.

# DC Anantnag chairs Gram Divas at Sheikhgund

Congratulates social activists of Sheikhgund for their exemplary efforts under NMBA

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

**ANANTNAG, FEB 14:** Deputy Commissioner (DC) Anantnag, SF Hamid, today conducted a Gram Divas and public grievance redressal programme at Government Middle School, Sheikhgund, Shangus.

Addressing the gathering, the DC congratulated the residents and noted with pride that Sheikhgund was recently mentioned by the Hon'ble Prime Minister in the 130th episode of 'Mann Ki Baat' on 25th January, acknowledging the village's collective resolve against drug abuse and tobacco consumption. The recognition at the national level, he observed, has infused renewed motivation among residents and has encouraged other areas of the district to undertake similar grassroots initiatives.

He further congratulated social activists of Sheikhgund for their exemplary efforts under

the Nasha Mukta Bharat Abhiyan (NMBA). He stated that the village has set a benchmark in community-led social reform and is now inspiring other villages and panchayats to initiate similar movements towards a drug-free society.

On the occasion, the Deputy Commissioner also inaugurated the Social Reform Movement Kashmir and felicitated social activists, teachers, and local youth for their outstanding contributions towards social reform and community service, particularly in the fight against drug abuse.

Responding to the suggestion about community development, the Deputy Commissioner reiterated the commitment of the district administration towards time-bound and transparent resolution of all genuine public demands.

Emphasising youth



empowerment, the DC directed the concerned departments to organise a Mission YUVA camp in the village next week, with participation from departments such as Horticulture, Agriculture, and Banking institutions to ensure that eligible youth are facilitated

under self-employment and livelihood schemes. He further stated that the proposal for establishing a handicraft/handloom training centre for female artisans would be explored in consultation with the competent authorities.

The programme was attended by the Assistant Commissioner Development (ACD), Block Development Officer (BDO), Child Development Project Officer (CDPO), Assistant Executive Engineer, Jal Shakti, Tehsil Social Welfare Officer (TSWO), and officers and officials from various line departments, besides residents and representatives of social organisations.

# DC hands over sanction orders under Karkhandar scheme in Udhampur

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

**UDHAMPUR, FEBRUARY 14:** Deputy Commissioner Udhampur Saloni Rai today handed over sanction orders to beneficiaries under the Karkhandar scheme in the presence of Assistant Director, Handicrafts and Handloom Department Udhampur, Joginder Mangol. The sanction orders were issued in favour of Shipali Sharma, Master Trainer Udhampur and Sanjay Kumar of Tandar (Chenani) for skill upgradation and the promotion of the traditional Chamba embroidery craft in Udhampur district.



Speaking on the occasion, the Deputy Commissioner highlighted the objectives of the scheme, stating that it primarily aims to empower artisans, enhance their skills and strengthen the livelihoods of craftsmen through structured interventions.

She emphasised that such initiatives play a significant role in the revival and preservation of traditional crafts while promoting sustainable self-employment opportunities.

The DC interacted with the beneficiaries, encouraging them to make optimal use of the assistance provided and extending best wishes for their continued success in promoting the craft.

# Drugs Control Department Shopian conducts district-wide inspections

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

**SHOPIAN, FEBRUARY 14:** On the directions of the Deputy Commissioner (DC) Shopian, Shishir Gupta, the Drugs Control Department, Shopian conducted extensive inspections across various villages and market areas of the district from 10 February to 14 February 2026 to ensure strict compliance with the provisions of the Drugs and Cosmetics Act and Rules.

The inspection drive covered Zainapora, Turkawangam, Trenz, Molu Danganpora, Keller Zealnag, Maspora and the main market area of Shopian.



During the course of inspections, CCTV footage and computerized billing systems of various medical establishments were thoroughly examined to verify adherence to prescribed license conditions and regulatory norms. The operations of three medical shops were suspended on the spot for violating the conditions of drug sale licenses.

Additionally, ten drug samples were lifted for testing to ensure the availability of quality drugs for the general public.

# SWD Bandipora organises awareness-cum-geriatric camp under Atal Vayo Abhyuday Yojana at Town Hall

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

**BANDIPORA, FEBRUARY 14:** Social Welfare Department (SWD) Bandipora in collaboration with health department and district legal services authority Bandipora organised one-day awareness-cum-geriatric care camp under the flagship programme Atal Vayo Abhyuday Yojana (AVYAY) at Town Hall Bandipora with focused outreach to senior citizens.

On the occasion, health check ups of senior citizens were carried out by



a team of doctors from health department and free medicines were also distributed. Later special awareness was given on Dementia and its

prevention, legal rights of senior citizens.

The event witnessed participation from officials of social welfare department, health department and legal experts from district legal services authority Bandipora, culminating in a fruitful interactive session wherein attendees clarified their queries.

The convergent endeavour reflects the Department's unwavering commitment towards financial holistic welfare of senior citizens, aligning with objectives of AVYAY scheme.

# Registration, issuance of Birth and Death certificates reviewed at Handwara

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

**KUPWARA, FEBRUARY 14:** Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC), Handwara, Javed Naseem Masoodi, today chaired a review meeting to assess the progress of registration and issuance of Birth and Death certificates and discussed other related issues in Sub Division Handwara.

During the meeting, the ADC reviewed the functioning of registration units and evaluated the status of timely registration

and issuance of Birth and Death certificates.

He stressed upon the concerned officers to ensure prompt and hassle-free delivery of services to the public, emphasizing that registration of vital events is essential for maintaining accurate records and enabling citizens to avail various government benefits.

The ADC directed the concerned officers to strictly adhere to the prescribed timelines and maintain



transparency and accountability in the registration process. He also instructed officers to enhance public awareness regarding the importance of registering births and deaths within the stipulated time period.

The Block Development Officers (BDOs) were instructed to organize awareness camps in villages, particularly in far-flung areas, to educate people about the procedure for registration of births and deaths

and to facilitate timely issuance of certificates.

Various issues and challenges being faced at the ground level were discussed in a threadbare manner, and the ADC issued necessary directions to streamline the process and improve coordination among departments.

The meeting was attended by Block Development Officers, Block Medical Officers, and officials of Municipal Committees Handwara and Langate.

HT EDITORIAL

Sheikhgund-Shangus villagers set example for others to follow

The Sheikhgund village in the Shangus area of South Kashmir's Anantnag district has created a record of sorts since it has become the first tobacco free village of the union territory of Jammu & Kashmir. The village found a mention in the 'Mann Ki Baat' programme with Prime Minister Narendra Modi mentioning about this achievement in the 130th edition of this path breaking programme on January 25 this year.

The residents of the Sheikhgund village have set an example for the others to follow. It is important that the people living across the length and breadth of the union territory take a cue from the Sheikhgund villagers and take practical steps for making their respective villages, areas, towns and cities tobacco free. This would give a new dimension to the Nasha Mukti Abhiyan launched across the country. Once tobacco products are banned at a particular place then it is obvious then there would be a change in the mindset of people.

Both the smokers as well as non-smokers would find it difficult to find a tobacco product since the same would not be available. There are chances that common masses would go for a social boycott of a person who does not mend his way and goes on with the habit of smoking both privately as well as publicly. It is imperative that hard steps are taken in this regard and a social boycott of the die-hard smoker would go a long way in inculcating discipline among this person.

At the same time, it is important that everyone plays his or her role to perfection so that there is reformation in the society. Once elders are motivated to give up smoking the young ones would themselves quit smoking and become respectable as well as responsible citizens of Jammu & Kashmir. There is an old saying that it is important to nip the evil in the bud so that there are no complications in future. This needs to be followed by the elders of society once they are dealing with the young ones especially when it comes to smoking.

The authorities also need to be strict in this regard and they should ensure that there is no sale of tobacco around the educational institutions in the union territory. There are standing instructions in this respect but these are not followed in letter and spirit. The law enforcement agencies should act sternly against the violators in this regard.

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

■ MS. RUBAL CHIB

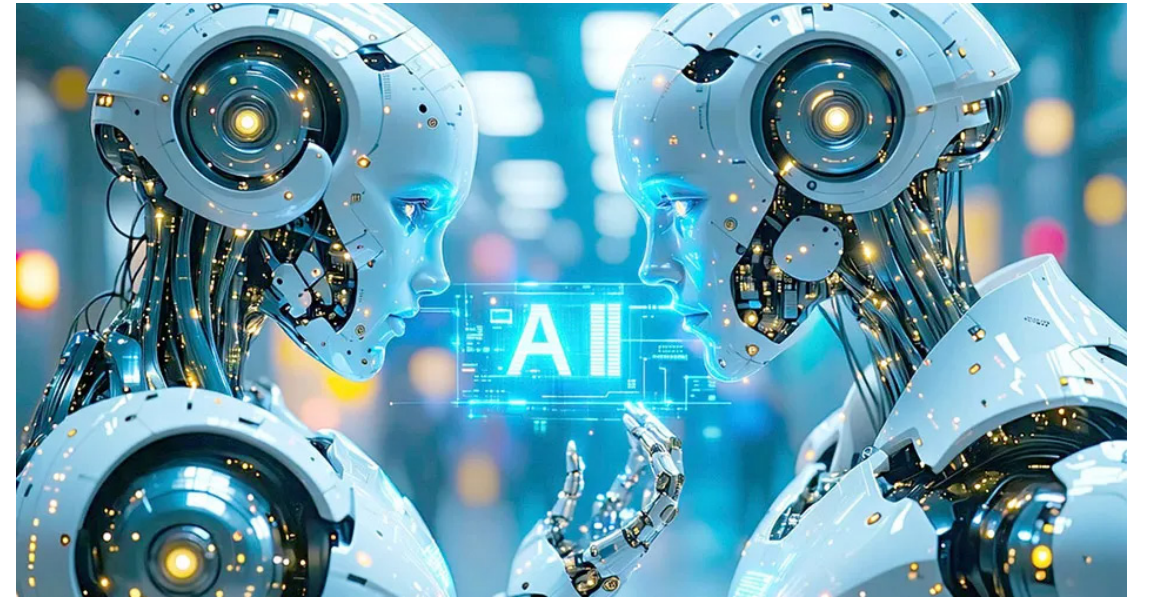
India's conversation on artificial intelligence is maturing. The focus is shifting from abstract capability to applied impact; from what AI can do in theory to what it can solve in practice. Few sectors make this distinction clearer than food and agriculture, where inefficiencies are not marginal but 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 India AI 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, startups 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

## Answer To Life - Dashavatar To Darwin



■ MOOL RAJ

On 12th February 1809 in Shrewsbury, England, a boy was born who would later be responsible for how humans thought about their existence. That boy was Charles Darwin, a name that echoes around the world, specifically when 'evolution' is spoken of. Scientific institutions, universities, humanist groups, and educational organisations commemorate his birthday by celebrating "Darwin Day" for his immense contribution to the field of science and for developing the Theory of Evolution by Natural Selection and authoring Origin of Species. His theory is metaphorically referred to as the "Theory of Everything" for Biology, as it provided the first unified explanation for the incredible diversity of life on Earth.

Simplifying Darwin's theory, he mainly talked about variation, where individuals within the same species have different traits and inheritance. These traits can be passed down to the next generation, and natural selection, where, due to limited resources in nature, individuals having traits better suited to their environment are more likely to survive and reproduce. Further explaining that more offspring are produced than can survive, leading to a struggle for existence, and that over generations, this process can result in gradual change and the formation of new species. However, Darwin did not know about genes or modern genetics, so he could not fully explain the biological mechanism



behind how traits are inherited. However, his theory was acknowledged across the scientific community.

### Edward Blyth - The Indian connection to Darwin

A year younger than Darwin, Edward Blyth, a British zoologist and one of the early contributors to evolutionary thought, is one of the lesser-known but key links between India and Darwin's work. Blyth served as the curator of the Asiatic Society in Calcutta (now Kolkata) from 1841 to 1862, where he sent specimens, which included detailed observations from

India, to Darwin. Blyth specimens included data on Indian cattle breeds, the wild ass of Kutch, and cross-bred Indian geese, amongst others. Both corresponded with mutual admiration for each other, with Darwin acknowledging and citing Blyth's work in Origin of Species with nearly 40 references.

### Dashavatar & Darwin

Edward Blyth wasn't the only connection with Darwin and India. A striking similarity to Darwin's theory — the Dashavatar of Lord Vishnu. Like many other Hindu philoso-

phies, where symbolism and deeper aspects are often rooted in scientific truths. The Dashavatar of Lord Vishnu appears to narrate how life on Earth evolved. Darwin's idea of life's aquatic origins resonates perfectly with the Matsya Avatar (fish). It then parallels the Kurma Avatar (tortoise), marking the amphibious transition. Living organisms gradually adapt to land, fully transforming into terrestrial animals with the Varaha Avatar (boar). Finally, the Narasimha Avatar (half-man, half-lion) represents the early stages of human evolution. However, from there, it takes a more philosophical and spiritual path: Rama symbolises the ideal human qualities we need, Shri Krishna achieves perfection in various arts and aspects of life that humans aspire to, Buddha represents the path to Nirvana (enlightenment), and finally, Kalki stands for cyclical or progressive evolution.

That being said, there are differences in approach: Dashavatar is more philosophical and spiritual, attributing the beginning of life to divine intervention. Darwin, on the other hand, focuses on natural selection, genetic variation, and random processes, with the sole aim of explaining biological diversity. The comparison is retrospective and symbolic, with no historical evidence of the influence of Hinduism on an agnostic Darwin.

While Darwin explains his work through science, Hinduism reminds us that humans have always sought to understand mysteries through religion. However, one can introspect on whether the Indian myths, philosophies, art, literature, and studies do actually have answers to life — its beginning and end; a decision open to the readers.

THE AUTHOR IS A REGULAR COLUMNIST AND FREELANCE WRITER

# Charar-e-Sharief: Where History Stands, and Development Fails



■ REYAZ BADHANA

The Charar-e-Sharief Assembly constituency holds a significant place in Kashmir due to its historical, spiritual, and geographical importance. For centuries, the shrine of Hazrat Sheikh Noor-ud-Din Wali (Nund Rishi) has shaped the religious and cultural identity of this region. The constituency also includes the historic shrine of Pakharpora and the scenic tourist destination of Yousmarg, both of which add to its unique character.

With such a rich combination of religious heritage, natural beauty, and historical importance, Charar-e-Sharief had all the ingredients needed to emerge as one of the most developed and recognized regions of Kashmir. Sadly, the ground reality tells a very different story.

Abdul Rahim Rather is widely known as the most influential and long-serving representative of the Charar-e-Sharief Assembly constituency. For decades, he remained the elected voice of this region and rose to prominence in state politics, even serving as Speaker of the Legislative Assembly. His political stature and authority were never in question.

Yet, despite his long hold on power, the expectations of the people largely remained unmet.

Even today, a substantial portion of the population in Charar-e-Sharief lives below

the poverty line. Basic necessities such as clean drinking water, functional healthcare centers, quality educational institutions, proper roads, and reliable public transport remain inadequate or completely absent in many areas.

The situation is especially troubling in rural pockets, where residents still struggle to access basic medical care and face serious difficulties even in cases of minor illness. This naturally raises a critical question: when a constituency remains under the leadership of a powerful representative for decades, why does development continue to remain out of reach?

Had there been sincere planning and focused investment in Charar-e-Sharief town, the Pakharpora shrine, and tourist destinations like Yousmarg, this constituency could have easily become a model region for the rest of Kashmir.

Yousmarg, with proper infrastructure, road connectivity, accommodation facilities, and promotion, could have generated employment for thousands of local youths. Similarly, Charar-e-Sharief and Pakharpora had the potential to grow into major hubs of religious tourism.

Unfortunately, successive governments and political representatives treated these locations as symbolic assets rather than developmental priorities. Beyond announcements and promises, no long-term or meaningful planning was carried out on the ground.

Another uncomfortable truth is that representatives from the Charar-e-Sharief Assembly constituency have almost always been part of the ruling establishment. Whether it was Ghulam Nabi Lone from the People's Democratic Party or Abdul Rahim Rather from the National Conference, both held ministerial positions and



enjoyed decision-making power.

Despite this access to authority, both failed to meet the genuine expectations of the people they represented.

This leads to an unavoidable question:

when a representative sits in the cabinet, what explanation can justify the continued neglect and backwardness of his own constituency?

One of the deeper challenges facing

Charar-e-Sharief is the lack of political awareness among the people. Even today, many residents remain unaware of their rights, development schemes, and the responsibilities of their elected leaders.

Holding representatives accountable, questioning their performance, and collectively demanding development are essential elements of democracy. Unfortunately, this culture of accountability remains weak in the region.

It is true that Abdul Rahim Rather, owing to his long political experience, influence in the Assembly, and uninterrupted representation, remains the most prominent political figure to have represented Charar-e-Sharief. However, it is equally true that despite his prolonged tenure, the constituency failed to witness the kind of balanced, inclusive, and sustainable development that the people had hoped for.

The time has come for the people of Charar-e-Sharief to move beyond personality-based politics, make development the central benchmark, and revive the habit of asking tough questions. Only through collective awareness and unity can the constituency move forward and claim the progress it truly deserves.

Charar-e-Sharief is not merely a town or a shrine; it represents the living legacy of Kashmir's Sufi tradition, cultural identity, and spiritual heritage. Yet, despite its immense historical and spiritual value, the region has remained politically neglected for decades. From as far back as I can remember, I have seen little to no visible change in terms of real development.

Even today, with all its historical, spiritual, and natural potential, Charar-e-Sharief continues to wait for sincere attention, honest leadership, and meaningful planning.

## Super Sunday for True Cricket Lovers



■ SAHIL MANZOOR

This Sunday is truly special for cricket lovers. Today at 7 p.m., two great cricketing nations are going head-to-head in the 10th edition of the ICC T-20 World Cup. The ICC T-20 World Cup started on 7th February 2026. All the qualified and strong cricketing nations are ready to fight head-to-head in their group stages. After the group stage, the Super Eight round begins, where every nation has to play in a do-or-die situation. Every match becomes important, and teams must give their best performance to move ahead in the tournament.

Cricket lovers across the world eagerly wait for such high-voltage matches. The excitement, energy, and enthusiasm among the fans create a festive atmosphere. Streets become quieter during important matches, and television screens become the center of attraction in every home. Cricket is not just a sport; it is an emotion for millions of people.

The sports sector has great potential to generate employment. Sports also support our health and keep our fitness at its best. When we are not physically fit, we become vulnerable to several health-related problems such as stress, excessive belly fat, high cholesterol, heart diseases, weakness of body parts, fatigue, insomnia, and many other issues. If someone asks me, "What is exercise?" my answer would be that every body movement is exercise. However, engaging in organized sports activities involves the entire body and mind. It feels delightful, refreshing, and uplifting.

There are hundreds of sports activities played around the world, and many of them are also played in our country. In India, a few games are extremely popular among the people, and many youngsters actively participate in them. Cricket is one of the most prominent sports in India. It is very pleasing to know that India has the richest cricket board in the world. The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI)



is financially strong and well-organized. It successfully conducts the Indian Premier League (IPL), which is one of the biggest cricket leagues in the world.

The IPL features top-class cricket players from across the globe. Every year, around ten teams participate in this mega league. The tournament attracts huge audiences, sponsorships, and investments. In one of my previous articles, I mentioned the net worth of the BCCI and explained how sports are becoming a full-time profession. Today, sports can give you recognition, fame, financial stability, and respect in society. Many young players now see sports as a career rather than just a hobby.

India has an impressive record in different sports at the international level. The country has produced many renowned sports personalities. In cricket, legends like Kapil Dev, Sunil Gavaskar, Rahul Dravid, and Sachin Tendulkar have made the nation proud with their extraordinary performances. In tennis, Sania Mirza and Mahesh Bhupathi have brought laurels to the country. In football, Baichung Bhutia has represented India at the international level with dedication and commitment. These personalities have won prestigious awards and have inspired millions of youngsters to take up sports seriously.

Every country allocates a separate

sports budget every fiscal year. Governments promote sports activities at the district, state, and national levels. Only the most talented and hardworking athletes reach the international level. Promoting sports sends a clear and positive message to the people of the country: stay active, stay healthy, and stay happy regardless of life's challenges.

It is impressive that government administrations are showing interest in sports development. Every year on August 29th, we celebrate National Sports Day to commemorate the birth anniversary of hockey legend Major Dhyan Chand. On this day, schools, colleges, and universities organize various sports activities. Students and teachers participate enthusiastically and spread awareness about the importance of sports in daily life.

The government is also focusing on sports infrastructure and encouraging youth participation. Sports stadiums are being constructed at the panchayat level with adequate facilities such as proper ground leveling, fencing, and basic infrastructure. This is an appreciable step toward the development of the sports sector. Providing such facilities at the grassroots level allows young talent to grow and flourish.

Every year, a large number of athletes from various sports are selected at national and international levels. In Kashmir, many leagues are being organized by sports departments and other agencies. These leagues provide opportunities to young players to showcase their talent. As a result, several promising sports personalities have emerged from Jammu and Kashmir in recent years.

Benefits of Sports Activities

Sports activities are interesting and enjoyable. Everyone, regardless of age, can participate in some form of sport. Sports keep us healthy and happy. They strengthen our muscles and bones, improve stamina, and enhance mental strength. Regular participation in sports reduces stress and anxiety and promotes better sleep.

Sports are also one of the best alternatives to drug addiction among the youth. Engaging in sports keeps young minds busy in positive activities and reduces the chances of falling into harmful habits. Scientific studies also suggest that physical activities release endorphins, which

improve mood and reduce stress levels.

Sports are a healthy package for your loved ones and family members. Encouraging children to play outdoor games keeps them physically active and mentally strong. It also develops discipline, teamwork, leadership qualities, and sportsmanship. Children who actively participate in sports are often more confident and socially active.

The sports field offers vast career opportunities. Today, many sportsmen earn their livelihood through coaching and training. They open gym centers, cricket academies, football coaching centers, and boxing clubs. Organizing cricket, football, or volleyball tournaments in local areas, with proper permission from concerned authorities, also promotes sports culture and provides employment opportunities.

The sports sector plays an important role in uplifting the country's economy. Major tournaments attract tourism, sponsorships, and investments. Infrastructure development, sports equipment manufacturing, and media broadcasting also contribute to economic growth.

Gulmarg is one of the most renowned and mesmerizing tourist destinations in the Kashmir Valley. It has immense potential for winter sports. Tourists from across the world visit Gulmarg to participate in skiing, snowboarding, mountaineering, and other adventure sports. Such activities not only promote tourism but also strengthen the local economy.

Recently, the Khelo India event concluded successfully, with participants from different regions showcasing their talents. Such mega sports events provide a national platform to young athletes. They motivate youth to adopt sports as a career and contribute positively to society.

In conclusion, sports are not merely a source of entertainment. They are a powerful tool for physical fitness, mental well-being, social harmony, and economic development. A Super Sunday filled with cricket excitement reminds us of the passion and unity that sports bring into our lives. Let us encourage our youth to participate in sports, maintain discipline, and stay away from harmful activities. A healthy nation is built on healthy individuals, and sports play a crucial role in shaping a strong and vibrant society.

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# Papaya Brings Glamour to the Face



SAHIL MANZOOR BHATTI

With the passage of time, the Kashmir Valley is witnessing the availability of high-quality fruits at affordable prices. In the past, only a few varieties of fruits were common—some grown locally, such as apples, pears, and cherries, while others like oranges, bananas, grapes, and melons were imported from other states at higher prices. Thanks to the rapid advancement in cutting-edge technologies, both the horticulture and agriculture sectors are thriving. As a simple rule: more production leads to lower prices, while low production causes prices to rise.

Smart and vigilant individuals take their health seriously, observe any abnormality in their body, and consult doctors when needed. They also maintain a healthy diet, which is essential for well-being.

### Why is Diet So Important for Good Health?

Almighty Allah has created human beings and, alongside, everything needed for their survival. Our bodies require a wide variety of foods rich in essential nutrients. Eating the same food every day can lead to nutritional deficiencies and digestive issues.

A human body is composed of around 36 trillion cells—the basic structural and functional units of life. To keep these cells healthy, we need a balanced diet. Different organs in the body—like the skin, eyes, hair, teeth, and stomach—require different



nutrients for proper functioning.

**No single food item contains all essential nutrients. For example:**

- Carrots are rich in vitamin A, which supports eye health.
- Collard greens are high in fiber and help with digestion.
- Fish is loaded with omega-3 fatty acids and supports heart health.
- Pulses are rich in protein and support muscle growth.

**Water keeps us hydrated and helps with bowel movements.**

### Let's Talk About Papaya

In recent times, especially after the watermelon controversy in Kashmir, papaya has become a household name. This sweet, tropical fruit is now trending across the Valley and is often sold in poly bags during winter.

Papaya is cultivated in Indian states

such as Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal, Madhya Pradesh, and Gujarat. With increasing awareness of its health benefits, papaya is becoming more popular than ever.

### Top 10 Health Benefits of Papaya

**Enhances Skin Health**  
Papaya is packed with antioxidants like vitamin A and C, which promote collagen production, make the skin radiant, and reduce wrinkles.

■ **Provides Energy**  
Thanks to its natural sugars and minerals, papaya offers an instant and sustained energy boost—perfect for mornings.

■ **Boosts Immunity**  
With its high vitamin C content, papaya strengthens the immune system and protects against infections.

■ **Supports Weight Loss**  
Low in calories and high in fiber, papaya helps you feel full longer, aiding in healthy weight management.

■ **Improves Mood and Brain Function**  
Papaya contains folate (vitamin B9), which is vital for brain health and mood regulation. Eating it regularly can enhance cognitive function and emotional well-being.

■ **Protects Eye Health**  
Rich in beta-carotene and vitamin A, papaya supports good vision and reduces the risk of age-related eye disorders.

■ **Aids Digestion**  
Papain, an enzyme in papaya, helps break down proteins and promotes smooth digestion.

■ **Reduces Inflammation**  
Its anti-inflammatory properties help reduce pain and inflammation caused by conditions like arthritis.

■ **Supports Heart Health**  
Papaya's potassium and fiber content help manage blood pressure and cholesterol, reducing the risk of heart diseases.

■ **Relieves Constipation**  
High in fiber, papaya promotes regular bowel movements and keeps the digestive system in check.

Papaya truly beneficial, don't just rely on papaya alone include a wide variety of fresh, seasonal fruits and vegetables in your diet. Avoid junk food, stay hydrated, and exercise regularly to maintain your health and vitality.

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# Nazir Ahmad Lone honoured with the Shaan-e-Varmul 2.0 award in recognition of his exemplary contributions to youth engagement and environmental conservation

HT NEWS NETWORK

**BARAMULLA, FEB 14:** In a notable recognition of contributions to the education sector in North Kashmir, Nazir Ahmad Lone, District Cultural Coordinator and DNO of National Programmes within the School Education Department of Baramulla, was awarded the prestigious "Shaan-e-Varmul 2.0" in acknowledgement of his exceptional work in youth engagement and environmental conservation.

The award ceremony took place at Thimayya Hall, where Mr Lone was honoured with high regard by the Dagger Division (19 Dagger Dev) in recognition of his dedicated service spanning over four years.

As District Cultural Coordinator, Mr Lone has led numerous transformative initiatives throughout Baramulla. In his role as Nodal Officer for national educa-



tional programs, he has effectively mobilised students to participate actively in various academic, cultural, and civic activities. His leadership in organising district-wide cleanliness campaigns, strengthening eco-clubs, and raising environmental awareness has played a significant role in fostering responsible and environmentally conscious

citizenship. Among his notable achievements is the organisation of large-scale cultural events such as the Shanti Yatra, which promoted communal harmony, youth involvement, and a collective sense of unity among students. Through consistent efforts, he has directed the enthusiasm of young individuals toward constructive

activities that contribute to nation-building, instilling values of patriotism, discipline, and social responsibility.

The conferment of the "Shaan-e-Varmul 2.0" award is a testament to Mr Lone's unwavering dedication, visionary leadership, and commitment to empowering the youth in the district. His work

exemplifies a harmonious integration of cultural stewardship, civic engagement, and excellence in program management.

The event was attended by dignitaries, education officials, and community members who praised his continuous service and inspiring contributions to fostering a progressive and harmonious society.

## DEMISE

Indeed, we belong to Allah, and to Him we shall return. With deep sorrow, it is hereby informed that Fatima, wife of Late Ghulam Mohammad Geer, resident of Chinkral Mohalla, Habba Kadal, Srinagar, passed away after a brief illness on 14 February 2026. The congregational Fateh Khawani will be held on February 16, 2026 (Monday) at 10:30 AM

We humbly request all relatives, friends, and well-wishers to pray for the forgiveness of the departed soul and for patience and strength for the bereaved family.

Mourning (Ta'ziyat) will be observed for three (3) days only.

Note: Ladies are kindly requested not to bring any kind of eatables, in accordance with Islamic teachings.

Contact:

9541193022 | 7006543637

## Public Notice

I have lost my twin children's date of birth certificate issued by the police station Boniyar under registration no. 104/15A/BRY/2 and 102/15A/BRY/2 verified police station Boniyar, Now I am applying for its duplicate if anybody has any objection in this regard may file the same at the BDO Office Noor Khah within the period of seven days after that no objection will be entertained.

**Hilal Ahmad Bukhari**  
Father of Syed Ulmaan Bukhari and Syed Azlaan Bukhari  
R/O:- Pehlipora, Boniyar.

## Deputy Chief Minister inspects govt offices in Satwari, Akhnoor, Sunderbani

Emphasizes prompt service delivery, responsive administration

HT NEWS NETWORK

**JAMMU, FEB 14:** Deputy Chief Minister, Surinder Choudhary, today conducted surprise inspection of various government offices in Satwari, Akhnoor and Sunderbani to review administrative functioning and public service delivery.

During his visit to the SDM Office Akhnoor, the Deputy Chief Minister took stock of the overall functioning there. He emphasized the need for greater efficiency, transparency and prompt grievance redressal to ensure better governance and responsive administration.

He also undertook a surprise inspection of the PWD (R&B) Division and Sub-Division offices in Akhnoor. He evaluated the performance standards and functioning of the departments. He directed the officers to maintain transparency in works execution and ensure time-bound completion of the projects.

Later, at the PWD Guest House in Sunderbani, the Deputy Chief Minister interacted with several delegations and individuals who apprised him of various issues and development concerns.

Senior PWD officers were also present during the interaction who had detailed discussion on addressing the grievances raised by the public.

While reviewing the functioning of offices across the inspected areas, the Deputy Chief Minister laid special



emphasis on seamless service delivery to the general public. He called for strict adherence to duty rosters and timely execution of official responsibilities.

Cautioning the officials against dereliction of duty and unauthorized absence, he warned that strict action would be initiated against those found neglecting their responsibilities.

Reiterating the government's commitment towards accountable and people-centric governance, the Deputy Chief Minister directed the officers to work with dedication to ensure that public services are delivered efficiently and without delay.

Later, the Deputy Chief Minister visited the BDO Office Lamberi and chaired a meeting there. He also inspected the construction site of the

100-bedded Mother and Child Healthcare Hospital at Lamberi. He emphasized timely completion of the project to further strengthen healthcare services for mothers and children in the region.

He also visited the under-construction motorable bridge, approach road from Bagnoti to Dabber. He asked the officers for speedy work execution and timely completion.

The Deputy Chief Minister interacted with the people of Bagnoti Lamberi. He assured them that their genuine issues shall be taken up with the concerned offices for timely resolution.

Various senior officers attended the meeting and also accompanied the Deputy Chief Minister during the inspections to various government offices.

## DLSA Reasi organises awareness programmes and chess competition

HT NEWS NETWORK

**REASI, FEB 14:** Under the leadership of Chairman District Legal Services Authority (DLSA) Reasi Khalil Choudhary and the guidance of Secretary DLSA Reasi Pooja Gupta, an awareness programme on the Right to Education was conducted today. Para Legal Volunteers (PLVs) of TLSC Katra organised the event at Government Girls Middle School Karua, Katra. PLVs highlighted important aspects of the Right to Education scheme and informed the public about free legal aid and services.

PLVs of DLSA Reasi carried out another awareness programme on the theme "Say No to Drugs" today at the Bus Stand Reasi and various other locations. The programme aimed to sensitise the general public, especially the youth, about the harmful effects of drug abuse and the serious social, psychological and legal consequences associated with substance addiction. During the drive, PLVs interacted with commuters, shopkeepers, drivers and

local residents to disseminate information regarding the ill effects of drugs and the importance of adopting a healthy, drug-free lifestyle.

Additionally, a chess competition was organised today at Sub Jail Reasi. The competition was held in the presence of ALADCs Nomni Sharma and Rishav Sharma, who interacted with the inmates and motivated them to participate in healthy activities. They emphasised the importance of discipline, positive thinking and constructive utilisation of time during their stay.

Another awareness programme on the observance of traffic rules was successfully carried out by PLVs of TLSC Mahore at Dewal Mahore today.

The programme aimed to sensitise the general public, drivers and youth about the importance of following traffic regulations to ensure road safety and prevent accidents.

The PLVs educated participants about the mandatory use of helmets and seatbelts, dangers of over-speeding, risks of drunken driving, hazards of using mobile phones while driving and the importance of carrying valid driving documents.

Concurrently, PLVs of DLSA Reasi conducted an awareness programme on "Bal Vivah Mukh Bharat" and "Beti Bachao Beti Padhao" today at Allya, Pouni.

During the programme, the PLVs sensitised participants about legal provisions related to the prohibition of child marriage, the rights of children and the social, psychological and health consequences of early marriage.

## GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU & KASHMIR OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER PWD (R&B) DIVISION QAZIGUND

NOTICE INVITING TENDERS

NIT No.52 OF R&B/QAZIGUND/2025-26 /E-TENDERING/5311-25 | DATED: 14-02-2026

For and on behalf of the Lt. Governor, Union Territory of J&K e-tenders are invited on %age basis from approved and eligible Contractors registered with J&K Govt. CPWD, Railways and other State/Central Governments for each of the following works: -

S. No	Name of Work	Estimated Cost (in Rs)	Basic Cost (In Rs)	GST Amount (In Rs)	Earnest Money (In Rs)	Time	Head of Account	Position of AAA
1.	Minor Repairs of Middle School Malikpora (SSA)	100000.00	84745.97	15254.27	2000/=	15 Working Days	PM SHRI WORKS PAB 2025-26	Order No. 396CHIRAG of 2026 Dated: 04-02-2026
2.	Minor repairs of Middle School Wanpora	100000.00	84749.97	15254.99	2000/=	15 Working Days	PM SHRI WORKS PAB 2025-26	Order No. 396CHIRAG of 2026 Dated: 04-02-2026
3.	Major Renovation of MS Dingowari	245929.22	208414.60	37514.62	4919/=	30 Working Days	PAB 2022-23 Samagra Shiksha	Society Order No.79-Chirag of 2023 Dated: 10-05-2023

Cost of T/Doc. (in Rs): 200/-  
Position of TS: Accorded

Class of Contractor: DEE Class

The NIT Consisting of qualifying information, eligibility criteria, specifications, Bill of quantities (B.O.Q.), Set of terms and conditions of contract and other details can be seen/downloaded from the departmental website www.jktenders.gov.in as per schedule of dates given below:

S. No.	Particulars	Dated
1	Date of Issue of Tender Notice	14.02.2026
2	Period of Downloading of bidder documents	From 16.02.2026 (11:00 AM) To 23.02.2026 (04:00 PM)
3	Bid submission Start Date	From 16.02.2026 (11:00 AM)
4	Bid Submission End Date	To 23.02.2026 (04:00 PM)
5	Date and time of opening of bid (online)	24.02.2026 (11:00 AM)

In the office of Executive Engineer PWD (R&B) Division QAZIGUND.

1. Bids must be accompanied with cost of tender document in shape of Treasury Challan / Receipt (Under MH- 0059 PWD) in favour of Executive Engineer R&B Division QAZIGUND [Tender Inviting Authority] (Name of Work to be mentioned on the Treasury Challan / Receipt) (Refer Govt. order No. O.M No. A/24 (2017)-651 Dt 07-06-2018 (The Date of Treasury Challan should be between the date of Start of Bid and Bid Submission End Date) and EMD (2% of advertised Cost) in the shape of CDR/FDR/BG pledged to Executive Engineer PWD(R&B) Division QAZIGUND (Tender receiving Authority).

2. All the Bidders have to submit Earnest Money/Bid Security (EMD@2%of Advertised Cost) in the shape of CDR/FDR/BG. Non submission of Earnest Money/Bid Security shall render the bidder as No-responsive.

3. The 1st lowest responsive (Successful) Bidder has to produce an amount equal to 5% of contract as Performance Security in the shape of CDR/FDR/BG in favour of Executive Engineer R&B Division QAZIGUND (Tender receiving authority) within 03 Days before fixation of Contract and shall be released after successful completion of Defect Liability Period (DLP) of the work. Failure to produce Performance Security shall render the L1 as non-responsive and case for debarment of the Contractor for a period of 01 Year be forwarded to Higher Authorities.

4. The Earnest Money Deposit (EMD@2% of Advertised Cost) in the shape of CDR/FDR/BG of the successful Bidder shall be released after receiving Performance security @5% of the allotted cost in the shape of CDR/FDR/BG and same shall be released after successful completion of Defect Liability Period (DLP) of the work.

The bidders are requested to quote their rates excluding GST. GST @18% shall be added to the contract value by the allotting authority at the time of issuance of allotment.

5. The date and time of opening of Bid shall be notified on Web Site www.jktenders.gov.in and conveyed to the bidders automatically through e-mail message on their e-mail address. The bids of Responsive bidders shall be opened online on same Web Site in the office of Executive Engineer PWD(R&B) Division QAZIGUND.

6. The bids for the work shall remain valid for a period of 120 days from the date of Opening of Technical bids.

7. The Earnest Money/Performance Security shall be forfeited if:

a) Any bidder/tenderer withdraws his bid/tender during the period of bid validity or makes any modification in the terms and conditions of the bid.

b) Failure of successful bidder to furnish the required performance security within specified time period before issue of letter of intent.

c) Successful Bidder fails to execute the agreement within 28 days after fixation of contract.

d) If at any stage of work, the Bidder back up from the contract, again the Performance security/EMD as well as work done claim will be forfeited.

8. Instruction to bidders regarding e-tendering process.

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

b. To participate in bidding process, bidder shall have to get Digital Signature Certificate (DSC) as per Information Technology Act-2000. Bidders can get digital certificate from any approved vendors.

c. The bidders have to submit their bids online in electronic format with digital signature. No financial bid will be accepted in physical form.

d. Bids will be opened online as per time schedule mentioned in Para-1.

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

9. The department will not be responsible for delay in online submission due to any reasons.

No: 5311-25 | Dated: 14-02-2026

Sd/- Executive Engineer, PW (R&B) Division Qazigund

DIPK: 10947/25 | Dated: 14-02-2026

# DIPR organises day-long workshop on 'Ethical Journalism and Evolving Landscape of Journalism' at Jammu

HT NEWS NETWORK

**JAMMU, FEB 14:** Directorate of Information and Public Relations (DIPR) today organised a day-long workshop on 'Ethical Journalism and the Evolving Landscape of Journalism', for Mediapersons of Jammu at Media Complex here.

The objective of the workshop was to sensitise the media professionals and communication practitioners about the changing dynamics of journalism and the critical importance of ethical standards in the present digital age.

During the workshop, Regional Director IIMC Jammu, Dr. Dilip Kumar and Assistant Professor, Vishav were the resource persons.

The Resource persons enlightened the participants on emerging trends in journalism, challenges posed by misinformation, and the growing influence of digital platforms on news consumption and dissemination. They also spoke



in length about the ethics in journalism and importance of ethical journalism in view of rising AI use in Journalism as well as digital journalism.

Speaking on the occasion, Director Information, Nitish Rajora highlighted the vital responsibility of journalists in the present scenario, stressing that the role of the media extends beyond reporting facts to shaping informed, balanced and responsible public

opinion.

"Journalists today operate in a fast-paced environment where information travels instantly. This makes adherence to ethical principles like accuracy, fairness, objectivity and accountability more important than ever", he said.

He also underscored the need for continuous capacity building to keep pace with technological advancements and evolving audience expectations.

The Director underlined the need for constant interaction between DIPR and Mediapersons, adding that the department will make it a regular feature to organise get-togethers for Journalists.

In his welcome address, Joint Director Information (IQR), Dr. Zahoor Ahmad Raina spoke about the role of media in present scenario. He also highlighted about the importance of fairness and credibility in the media.

Joint Director Information Jammu, Deepak Dubey in his concluding remarks emphasized on the role of Mediapersons in present scenario of evolving digital age. He also said such workshops will be conducted in coming times also to strengthen collaborations between media institutions and government departments to promote professional excellence, transparency and responsible journalism.

During the workshop, an interactive session was also held between the participants and resource persons, sharing experiences and seeking guidance on ethical dilemmas faced in professional practice.

Deputy Director Information (PR), Javid Ahmad Rather; Information Officer Alka Misra along with other officers and officials of DIPR were present on the occasion.

The workshop was attended by Mediapersons of various National and local Media organisations. UNI

## DC Ramban reviews arrangements for Mahashivratri celebrations

HT NEWS NETWORK

**RAMBAN, FEBRUARY 14:** Deputy Commissioner Ramban Mohammad Alyas Khan today chaired a meeting with representatives of religious organisations to review arrangements for the festival of Mahashivratri. The objective was to ensure smooth, safe and harmonious celebrations across the district.



The meeting was attended by ADC Varunjeet Singh Charak, Tehsildar Ramban, Executive Engineers of JPDCL and Jal Shakti, Dy SP Operations, Chief Executive Officers of Municipal Committees and other concerned officers.

The Deputy Commissioner informed the meeting that all necessary arrangements, including civil and security measures, have been put in place by the concerned departments in line with the directions issued during earlier meetings.

To maintain sanitation and hygiene, all Block Development Officers (BDOs) and Municipal Committees were instructed to ensure cleanliness in and around temples. The Assistant Director, Food, Civil Supplies and Consumer Affairs (FCS&CA) was asked to conduct joint market inspections with Revenue, Police and other departments to monitor quality, prevent overpricing and ensure adequate availability of essential commodities, LPG cylinders and other food items.

The Executive Engineer, JPDCL, was directed to ensure uninterrupted electricity supply during Mahashivratri, while the Jal Shakti Department was asked to maintain regular water supply and deploy water tankers wherever required.

The Chief Medical Officer was instructed to ensure the availability of ambulances, adequate medical staff and essential medicines during religious processions and celebrations. Meanwhile, Fire and Emergency Services was directed to deploy fire tenders at key religious locations to ensure a prompt response in case of emergencies.

The Deputy Commissioner resolved issues highlighted by representatives of religious organisations on the spot by issuing necessary directions to the concerned officers.

## Two-day HRD programme on Integrated Pest Management inaugurated at Jammu

HT NEWS NETWORK

**JAMMU, FEBRUARY 14:** A two-day Human Resource Development (HRD) Programme on Integrated Pest Management (IPM) was inaugurated today at the Conference Hall of the Directorate of Agriculture, Talab Tillo, Jammu. The programme is being organised by the Central Integrated Pest Management Centre (CIPMC) Jammu in collaboration with the Department of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, Jammu.

Director Agriculture Jammu Anil Gupta presided over the inaugural session as the chief guest.

Prominent officers present included Joint Director Agriculture (Extension) Sanjay Anand, Deputy Director Agriculture (Central) Sanjeev Rai Gupta, Plant Protection Officer (PPO) Raju Mahajan, Deputy Director (Plant Protection) CIPMC Jammu Dr. Mithilesh Kumar Arya, Assistant Director (Law Enforcement) Kuldeep Singh, ASCO (I&P) Sanjeev Mehta, Programme Officer Vivek Mahajan and Assistant Plant Protection Officer (Entomology) Ravi Kumar Chhapare.



In his inaugural address, Director Agriculture Jammu Anil Gupta emphasised the significance of capacity building for field functionaries and farmers in promoting sustainable agricultural practices.

He highlighted the need to adopt eco-friendly and need-based pest management strategies to reduce the indiscriminate use of chemical pesticides, ensure safe food production, safeguard environmental health and enhance farmers' income. Sanjay Anand delivered a detailed presentation on the safe and judicious use of pesticides. He elaborated on recommended dosages, proper timing and method of application, use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), compliance with label claims and the importance of spreading awareness among farmers regarding the hazards associated with pesticide misuse.

Dr. Mithilesh Kumar Arya made a comprehensive presentation on IPM and the safe use of pesticides. He explained the core principles of IPM, including pest surveillance, monitoring based on Economic Threshold Levels (ETLs), biological control measures, resistance management and integrated strategies to minimize environmental and health risks.

PPO Raju Mahajan addressed the gathering and reiterated the need for strengthening field-level implementation of IPM practices. He called upon the officers to work in close coordination to ensure that farmers adopt scientific and sustainable pest management techniques.

He also sensitised the officers about creating awareness regarding the toxicity classification of pesticides as indicated on product labels. A technical session was conducted by Assistant Plant Protection Officer (Entomology) Ravi Kumar Chhapare, who provided insights into the National Pest Surveillance System. He elaborated on its role in real-time pest monitoring, early warning mechanisms and scientific decision-making to mitigate crop losses and strengthen field-level advisory services.

The programme witnessed active participation from field officials and farmers and is expected to further strengthen pest surveillance systems, promote responsible pesticide use and enhance sustainable agricultural productivity in the Jammu region.

## Kisan Mela begins at historic Airwan Shrine in Kathua

HT NEWS NETWORK

**KATHUA, FEBRUARY 14:** The annual Mahashivratri celebrations at the historic Airwan Shrine commenced today with the inauguration of a Kisan Mela organised by the District Administration Kathua.

The event witnessed the enthusiastic participation of farmers, devotees and local residents.

MLA Kathua Dr. Bharat Bhushan and Deputy Commissioner Kathua Rajesh Sharma inaugurated the mela.

The two-day fair features the exhibition and sale of locally grown agricultural produce, including fruits, vegetables and food grains, reflecting the agrarian strength of the region. Stalls established by the Agriculture and allied departments are providing awareness regarding modern farming techniques, departmental schemes and best practices. Farmers are also interacting with experts to obtain guidance on crop production, horticulture and animal husbandry.

Cultural performances presented by artists of the Cultural Academy, including Shiva Tandava and Dogri items, added colour to the inaugural day and highlighted the spiritual significance of the festival.

Addressing the gathering, the MLA appreciated the efforts of the District Administration and the Airwan Mandir



Committee for organising the mela. He stated that such events promote rural entrepreneurship, strengthen communal harmony and help preserve the rich cultural heritage of the area.

The Deputy Commissioner said that the Kisan Mela, besides enhancing the festive atmosphere, serves as an important platform for the dissemination of knowledge regarding improved agricultural practices and welfare schemes among farmers. He urged them to make maximum use of the facilities and expert guidance available at the venue.

The Deputy Commissioner further informed that a grand Ganga Aarti will be organised at 6:00 PM on the day of Mahashivratri at the shrine and

invited the public to participate.

The Airwan Mandir Committee, under the supervision of Tehsildar Nagri Aana Jamwal thanked the administration, participants and devotees for their cooperation and support.

Earlier, competitions in Kabaddi, Volleyball, Tug of War and athletics were conducted with large public participation. Prizes were distributed among the winners and local and national-level school players were felicitated.

Among others, Chief Agriculture Officer Kathua Jatinder Khajuria, Block Development Officer Nagri Pardeep Singh and other senior officers were present.

## JKTPO hosts workshop on "Penetration of MFIs, NBFCs, FinTechs for MSME Financing under RAMP"

HT NEWS NETWORK

**JAMMU, FEBRUARY 14:** Jammu and Kashmir Trade Promotion Organisation (JKTPO), in collaboration with Jammu & Kashmir Bank, today organized a UT level workshop on "Penetration of MFIs, NBFCs and FinTech companies for MSME financing under RAMP at Jammu Tawi Golf Course, Sidhra.

The workshop is part of the Raising and Accelerating MSME Performance (RAMP) Programme, a World Bank-supported Central Sector Scheme of the Government of India aimed at strengthening the MSME access to markets and credit while improving institutional governance and Centre-State collaboration.

The objective of the workshop was to set in motion the penetration of MFIs, NBFCs and FinTech companies for MSME financing under RAMP programme by introducing them to the MSME landscape of Jammu and Kashmir besides sensitizing them to the challenges faced by MSMEs in the Union Territory. The workshop was aimed to digitally empower the MSMEs by connecting them to alternate sources of funding and fostering greater access to formal and technology-driven financial solutions. The

Senior government officials from Industries & Commerce Department, representatives from RBI, NABARD, Banking Institutions, 15+ leading NBFCs, MFIs, FinTech companies, Industry Leaders and MSME stakeholders participated



in the event to deliberate on practical, scalable and technology-driven solutions to deepen credit penetration across the UT.

Commissioner Secretary, Industries & Commerce Department, Vikramjit Singh, graced the occasion as the chief guest.

During his key address, the Commissioner Secretary underscored the pivotal role of MSMEs as engines of employment generation, regional equity and grassroots economic stability. He further stated that the J&K government is committed to building a resilient MSME credit ecosystem rooted in collaboration among the banks, NBFCs, MFIs and FinTech platforms under RAMP programme.

He further advocated for strengthened district level outreach and development of a time bound action plan with measurable

outcomes. He described the workshop as a significant milestone in re-imagining credit delivery mechanisms in the Union Territory.

Sudershan Kumar, Managing Director, JKTPO underscored the strategic importance of MSMEs as the backbone of J&K's economy, highlighting the predominance of micro enterprises and the corresponding need for flexible, doorstep-oriented credit models tailored to their realities. He emphasized that the workshop aims to move beyond deliberations and foster actionable collaboration frameworks among the stakeholders.

Addressing the workshop, Chandra Shekhar Azad, Regional Director, Reserve Bank of India, emphasized the pivotal role of a robust and inclusive financial system in driving sustainable MSME growth in J&K.

Addressing the gathering, Vikas

Mittal, General Manager/Officer-in-Charge, NABARD, underscored the critical importance of strengthening the MSME credit ecosystem in J&K through district-focused interventions. He commended the Jammu & Kashmir administration and Jammu and Kashmir Trade Promotion Organisation for organizing a forward looking workshop under the RAMP Programme. He also stressed the importance of digital onboarding and district-level awareness drives to ensure that entrepreneurs are not only credit-linked but also digitally empowered.

Sunit Kumar, Chief General Manager, J&K Bank, highlighted the evolving MSME credit landscape in Jammu & Kashmir. He stressed for encouraging growth in formal credit penetration over recent years while acknowledging persistent structural gaps, particularly

among micro and first-generation enterprises. He strongly advocated for structured co-origination and co-lending partnerships between banks, NBFCs and MFIs to optimize risk-sharing, improve last-mile outreach and enhance the credit delivery efficiency. He reiterated J&K Bank's commitment to spearhead such collaborative frameworks under the RAMP programme and assured stakeholders that the Bank would actively facilitate ecosystem partnerships, support district-level outreach initiatives to build a sustainable, inclusive and technology-enabled MSME credit architecture in Jammu & Kashmir.

The workshop featured a series of focused deliberations on strengthening MSME financing in Jammu & Kashmir, culminating in a forward-looking roadmap to deepen credit penetration, enhance digital enablement and foster structured collaboration among Banks, NBFCs, MFIs, and FinTechs.

Key outcomes included identifying priority sectors and districts, promoting collaborative lending, district-level awareness and capacity-building initiatives, and forming a Joint Working Group under RAMP, formalized via a workshop Resolution/Action Charter.

The JKTPO remains committed towards supporting and empowering the MSMEs in all possible ways, through sustained policy facilitation, capacity building, market linkages and improved access to finance.

# Uncapped Topping replaces injured Stirling in Ireland squad for rest of the T20 World Cup

■ UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

**COLOMBO:** Paul Stirling, Ireland's captain, has been ruled out of the remainder of the T20 World Cup, and has been replaced by Sam Topping ahead of their next game, against Oman in Colombo on Saturday.

Topping was named as a replacement player when Stirling was ruled out of the remainder of the T20 World Cup in India and Sri Lanka because of a hamstring injury, Zimbabwe captain Sikandar Raza confirmed at the toss ahead of the game against Australia in Colombo on Friday. Top-order batter Ben Curran has been brought in as his replacement.

Taylor, 40, had picked up a hamstring injury in Zimbabwe's first match of the tournament, which they won against Oman, and had to retire hurt when on 31 off 30 balls. He had earlier taken three catches behind the

turf while completing a catch to send back Josh Inglis in the seventh over of Australia's innings. Stirling walked out to open the innings in Ireland's chase of Australia's 182 for 6, but limped off after facing just one ball. Ireland went on to lose the match by 67 runs.

"He went for a scan this evening, so we'll have to wait for confirmation," Wilson had said at the time. "He thought he was okay when he went out there to bat. He wasn't going to go out if he didn't think he was right. He was trying to maximise the powerplay, basically. He was trying to take off for a single, but clearly the knee seized up even more."

Topping, 20, is a left-hand top-order batter, and has never played internationally. In 12 career T20s, he has 374 runs with four fifties and has an average of 34.00 and a strike rate of 134.05.



## Curran drafted in after Taylor is ruled out of remainder of T20 World Cup

■ UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

**COLOMBO:** Veteran wicketkeeper-batter Brendan Taylor has been ruled out of the remainder of the ongoing T20 World Cup in India and Sri Lanka because of a hamstring injury, Zimbabwe captain Sikandar Raza confirmed at the toss ahead of the game against Australia in Colombo on Friday. Top-order batter Ben Curran has been brought in as his replacement.

Taylor, 40, had picked up a hamstring injury in Zimbabwe's first match of the tournament, which they won against Oman, and had to retire hurt when on 31 off 30 balls. He had earlier taken three catches behind the



stumps. With at least two more games to go in the tournament, Curran has been brought into the squad. Curran, who has centuries in both Tests and ODIs, has never been considered for T20 cricket before. In 40 T20 innings, he has 872 runs at a strike rate of 126.01 with a best of 71.

For the game against Australia, Tadiwanashe Marumani will keep wicket against Australia. Allrounder Tony Munyonga has come into the Zimbabwe XI in Taylor's place.

There was always a fear that Taylor might struggle to make the XI for the game against Australia, but it was understood that the team management would leave Taylor out, if not fit, for the game in the hope of having him ready for the remaining fixtures.

Taylor made a comeback to international cricket in July 2025 after serving a three-and-a-half year ban for breaching the ICC's anti-corruption code. Taylor, whose sanction ended on July 25, was named in Zimbabwe's squad for the second Test against New Zealand in August. That was one of two Tests for Taylor upon his comeback, to go with two ODIs and 14 T20s, in which he had 282 runs, including an innings of 123 against Botswana in a T20 World Cup qualifying game in September 2025.

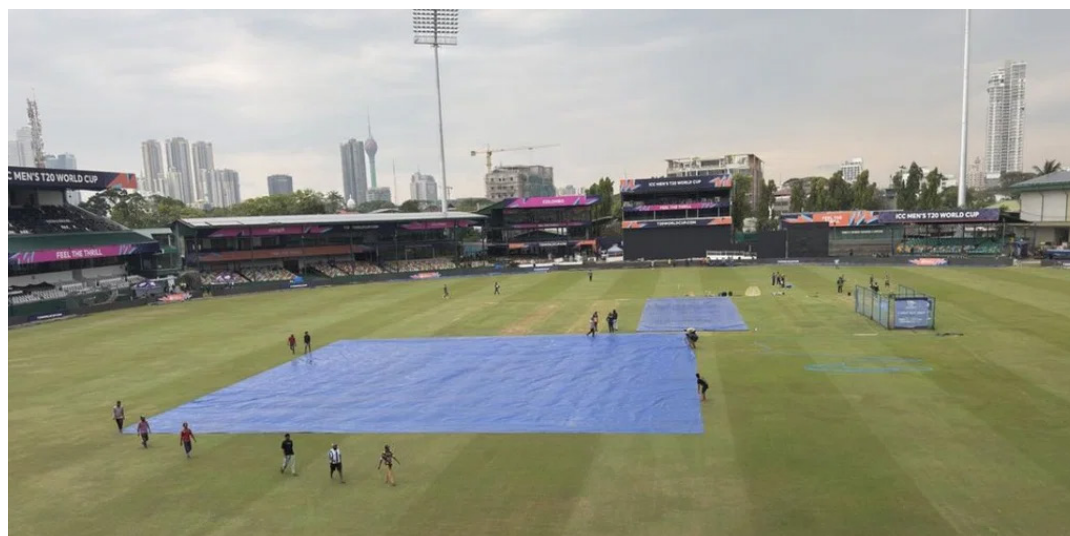
# High risk of rain in marquee India vs Pakistan T20 World Cup game in Colombo

■ UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

**COLOMBO:** Two days out from a will-they-won't-they India vs Pakistan contest, the weather in Colombo has largely been clear. But the Sri Lanka Department of Meteorology has warned of a low-pressure system developing in the Bay of Bengal, which indicates a high risk of rain that could disrupt the marquee World Cup game on Sunday evening.

The weather forecast for Sunday in the Khetarama area of Colombo, where the R Premadasa Stadium is located, shows warm and humid conditions to start the day, with temperatures peaking around 30° to 31°C. However, scattered thunderstorms are predicted throughout the afternoon, with a 50-70% chance of rain.

With the game set to begin at 7pm local time, some models suggest heavy thundershowers in the hours before the scheduled start, which might lead to a de-



layed toss, or a shortened game. While clouds are expected to linger, some forecasts indicate a slight clearing trend after 8pm, though isolated showers remain possible through the night.

The Premadasa, however, features a sophisticated drainage system and specialised ground

staff protocols designed to handle Colombo's tropical downpours. And unlike many international venues that only cover the pitch, the Premadasa has enough covers to protect the entire playing area. This prevents the outfield from soaking up water in the first place.

The staff also manually push water from one cover to the next until it reaches the perimeter drains. This method is often faster and more effective than using mechanical super soppers. Under standard conditions, the ground typically becomes fit for play within 45 to 60 minutes

after heavy rain stops. There's also some rain expected the day before, on Saturday, which could disrupt India's scheduled training session at the ground.

The weather in Colombo has otherwise been largely dry, making any rain unseasonal for this time of the year. So far, none of the matches in Sri Lanka of this T20 World Cup has been impacted by inclement weather, even though there have been a few close calls - such as Sri Lanka's match against Oman, where rain was predicted but fell hours after the match ended.

Both India and Pakistan, meanwhile, currently have four points each after playing two games. But India are ahead in Group A due to a superior net run rate of 3.050 to Pakistan's 0.932. If rain in Colombo forces a washout, both sides will get one point each as there is no reserve day for group-stage matches.

## T20 World Cup: Siddique, Aryansh dazzle as UAE defeat Canada by five wickets

■ PTI

**NEW DELHI:** Junaid Siddique's five-wicket haul was complemented by Aryansh Sharma's half-century as the United Arab Emirates defeated Canada by five wickets in their ICC Men's T20 World Cup match here on Friday. Senior pacer Siddique headlined a disciplined bowling effort, returning with figures of 5/35 to help UAE restrict Canada to a below-par 150 for 7.

Aryansh then struck an unbeaten 74 off 53 balls laced with six fours and three sixes, while Sohaib Khan also played a very useful knock of 51 off just 29 balls to guide UAE over the line with two balls to spare.

Chasing the modest total, UAE struggled to build momentum and lost wickets at regular intervals even as Aryansh held firm at one end.

Left-arm spinner Saad Bin Zafar (3/14) dented the chase with three key strikes. UAE skipper Muhammad Waseem was the first to depart, falling to pacer Kaleem Sana.

Zafar then dismantled the middle order, first dismissing Alishan Sharafu, who mistimed a cover drive to Nicholas Kirton at extra cover, before removing Mayank Kumar and Harshit Kaushik with catches at long-on and midwicket respectively.

At the halfway mark, UAE needed 92 off 60 balls.

But just when the chase appeared



to be slipping away, Aryansh found support in Sohaib, who smashed four sixes and as many fours.

The pair stitched together a crucial 83-run stand for the fifth wicket, bringing the equation down to 26 off 12 balls.

Aryansh showed nerves of steel, smashing back-to-back boundaries before adding a third off a free hit in the penultimate over.

Needing 8 off the last over, he hit a towering six to ease off the pressure.

While Canada added to the drama by taking a wicket, it was a little

too late with new man Muhammad Arfan finding the rope for a memorable win.

Earlier, opting to bat, Canada were jolted early as Siddique and Muhammad Jawadullah ripped through the top order inside the first four overs.

Siddique set the tone with a superb opening spell, claiming two wickets upfront before adding three more at the death.

He began by pitching one up around off to lure skipper Dilpreet Bajwa into an aerial stroke, only for the opener to mistime it and offer a simple catch.

## T20 WC: All-round Zimbabwe script 23-run upset win over injury-hit Australia

■ PTI

**COLOMBO:** Zimbabwe rode on collective brilliance to pull off the first big upset of the ongoing T20 World Cup, stunning injury-ravaged former champions Australia by 23 runs here on Friday.

This was only the second time that the African nation defeated the traditional heavyweights in the format, having last beaten them back in the 2007 edition of the showpiece.

Riding on opener Brian Bennett's unbeaten 64 and useful contributions from other top-order batters, Zimbabwe posted a challenging 169 for 2 after Australia, who were without some of their front-line bowlers, invited them to bat.

The lower-ranked side then bowled Australia out for 146 in 19.3 overs on a sluggish pitch to register a famous win.

In the 2007 edition of the same tournament, Zimbabwe, then led by Prosper Utseya, had beaten Australia by five wickets with one ball to spare in a low-scoring match in Cape Town.

Pacer Blessing Muzarabani returned figures of 4/17, while Brad Evans (3/23), Wellington Masakadza (1/36) and Ryan Burl (1/9) also delivered with the ball for Zimbabwe.

It was a disaster for Australia in their pursuit of 170 as they suffered a top-order collapse and were reduced to 29 for 4 in 4.3 overs with Josh Inglis (8), Travis Head (17), Cameron Green (0) and Tim David (0) dismissed cheaply. Matt Renshaw played a lone hand for Australia with a 44-ball 65 while Glenn Maxwell made 31. From 38 for 4 at the end of Powerplay, Australia reached 67 for 4 at the halfway mark with 103 runs needed for a win.

# Voices United: A Literary Confluence Rekindles Kashmir's Cultural Spirit

Three-day Adbi Markaz Kamraz conference in Jammu charts a collective roadmap for regional languages and shared heritage

■ JAMEEL ANSARI

**JAMMU, FEB 14:** In a rare and stirring display of linguistic harmony, writers, poets, scholars and cultural activists from across Jammu and Kashmir gathered under one roof in Jammu this week, transforming a routine annual conference into a landmark cultural moment.

The 46th annual three-day literary and cultural conference of Adbi Markaz Kamraz, held from February 10 to 12 at Kundan Lal Saigal Hall, evolved into much more than a literary congregation. It became a celebration of shared heritage, a forum for policy debate, and a united call for the preservation and promotion of Jammu and Kashmir's diverse mother tongues.

From the very first session, the atmosphere was electric. The packed hall resonated with applause as renowned singer Rashid Jahangir rendered verses of Kashmiri Sufi poets, setting a soulful tone for the proceedings. Breaking with tradition, the organizers opened the

conference with a multilingual mushaira instead of concluding with one — a symbolic gesture underscoring the spirit of inclusivity that defined the event.

Presided over by noted writer Manshoor Banahali, the mushaira featured poets representing Kashmiri, Dogri, Punjabi, Pahari, Gojri, Shina and Bharderwahi languages. The evening was not just about poetry; it was about recognition — of each language's place in the region's cultural mosaic.

The formal inauguration brought together literary and political leadership. Speaker of the Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly, Abdul Rahim Rather, attended as chief guest despite his busy schedule during the budget session. In his address, he lauded the role of writers and cultural organizations in safeguarding identity and assured support for demands emerging from the conference.

Presiding over the inaugural session, Professor Shad Ramzan described the gathering as "the beginning of a new era" for regional languages. He empha-

sized that the future of Kashmiri and other local tongues depends on collective resolve and institutional backing.

Throughout the three days, discussions moved beyond ceremonial speeches. A key thematic session examined the implementation of the National Education Policy 2020, with a focus on the status of mother tongues in schools. Educationists and scholars debated both progress and gaps, calling for immediate measures to ensure regional languages are meaningfully integrated into curricula.

Another highlight was a thought-provoking literary debate on contemporary global trends and the present condition of Kashmiri literature, chaired by Professor Ayaz Rasool Nazki. The exchange reflected both concern and cautious optimism about the evolving literary landscape.

Perhaps the most consequential session was the resolutions meeting. Chaired by senior Dogri writer Mohan Singh, the gathering unanimously adopted several key resolutions: effective

implementation of mother-tongue provisions under NEP 2020; introduction of Kashmiri as a compulsory subject at the secondary level; granting classical language status to Kashmiri; and appointment of lecturers for teaching Kashmiri at senior secondary schools. Delegates stressed that these measures are essential to prevent further marginalization of regional languages.

The awards ceremony on the second day added emotional depth to the conference. Presided over by eminent scholar Professor Mohammad Zaman Azurda, with MLA Kulgam Mohammad Yousuf Tarigami as chief guest, the event honoured distinguished contributions to literature and cultural preservation. The prestigious "Sharaf Kamraz 2025" was conferred upon Professor Shad Ramzan for his enduring service to Kashmiri language and literature.

Book releases, including English translations of significant Kashmiri works, symbolized a bridge between regional creativity and wider readership. Schol-

ars described translation as both preservation and expansion — safeguarding linguistic heritage while inviting global engagement.

The final day concluded with another vibrant mushaira, reinforcing the conference's core message: literature remains one of the most powerful instruments of unity in a region long marked by political and social complexities.

As delegates dispersed, what lingered was not just the memory of eloquent speeches or stirring poetry, but a renewed commitment. The conference ended with a collective pledge to strengthen cooperation among Kashmiri, Dogri, Pahari, Gojri, Punjabi and other linguistic communities.

In a time when languages across the world face erosion, the gathering in Jammu stood as a reminder that cultural survival demands organized effort, institutional will and above all, solidarity. For three days, at least, the voices of Jammu and Kashmir spoke not in isolation — but in chorus.

