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# Khelo India Winter Games Kicks Off in Gulmarg Amid Fanfare

LG Manoj Sinha Calls It a Celebration of Unity, Resilience and India's Sporting Spirit

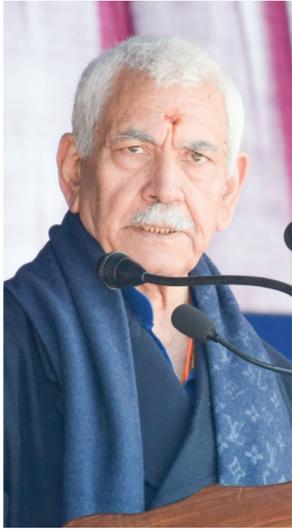
HT NEWS NETWORK

**GULMARG, FEB 23:** The snow-clad slopes of Gulmarg came alive on Monday as Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha inaugurated the 6th edition of the Khelo India Winter Games, describing the event as a "national festival" that reflects the unity and diversity of the country.

Addressing athletes and officials from across India, the Lieutenant Governor said the Winter Games have grown beyond a competitive platform to become a powerful symbol of peace, equality and camaraderie.

"The Khelo India Winter Games revive the ideals of the sporting spirit. In our diverse nation of many languages and cultures, the Winter Games at Gulmarg serve as a universal language that binds us together," Sinha said.

Emphasising that the broader aim of the Games is to strengthen national unity, he noted that when athletes



from different regions train, compete and celebrate together, barriers of language, culture and geography fade before the shared passion for sport.

He described winter sports as a true test of character, where participants compete not just against one another but against nature itself. "These slopes teach resilience—falling, learning and rising stronger. True character is revealed not only in victory but also in adversity," he said, urging athletes to uphold the highest standards of sportsmanship.

Referring to the transformation of the sporting landscape in Jammu and Kashmir, Sinha credited the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the development of modern sports infrastructure under the Prime Minister's Development Package, along with the establishment of 100 Khelo India Centres across the Union Territory.

Competitions in alpine skiing, [Turn on Page 2](#)

## Omar Abdullah Charts Roadmap to Turn Gulmarg into Global Skiing Powerhouse

At 6th Khelo India Winter Games, CM pushes for the second picture in the method of artificial snow systems, says participation is the true spirit of sport

HT NEWS NETWORK

**GULMARG, FEB 23:** Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Sunday laid out an ambitious vision to transform Gulmarg into an international ski destination, calling for urgent investment in artificial snow infrastructure to safeguard the future of winter sports in Jammu and Kashmir.

Addressing the inaugural ceremony of the Khelo India Winter Games, which was formally inaugurated earlier by Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha, the Chief Minister said the government's commitment to developing Gulmarg as a world-class ski

[Turn on Page 2](#)



## 18-Month Manhunt Ends: JeM's 'Israel Group' Dismantled in Kishtwar

HT NEWS DESK / AGENCIES

**JAMMU, FEB 23:** In a significant counter-terror breakthrough in Jammu and Kashmir, security forces have neutralised all seven members of a Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM) module known as the "Israel Group," concluding an 18-month-long operation in the rugged Kishtwar belt.

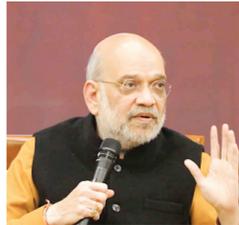
Inspector General of Police (Jammu Zone) Bhim Sen Tuti said the final phase of the operation culminated on Sunday with the killing of three Terrorists, including the group's self-styled commander Saifullah, in an encounter in the Chatroo area of Kishtwar district.

[Turn on Page 2](#)

## Bharat Taxi to Fix Minimum Base Fare for Drivers: Amit Shah

HT NEWS DESK / AGENCIES

**NEW DELHI, Feb 2:** Union Cooperation Minister Amit Shah on Monday declared that Bharat Taxi, the newly launched cooperative ride-hailing platform, will ensure that drivers on its network do not earn below a guaranteed minimum base rate per kilometre — a move aimed at safeguarding driver incomes



and redefining the business model of app-based mobility services.

Addressing a town hall meeting with cab and auto drivers from Delhi-NCR and Gujarat, Shah said that existing private aggregators had deliberately refrained from fixing a minimum base fare in order to maximise corporate profits.

"I asked all three companies whether they had set a minimum base rate for drivers. They said no. We will not do this," Shah said. "Whatever" [Turn on Page 2](#)

## Valley Schools Spring Back to Life After 73-Day Winter Hiatus

Classes 9-12 Resume Across Kashmir; Colleges Already Reopened After 52-Day Break

HT NEWS NETWORK

**SRINAGAR, FEB 23:** Academic activity resumed across the Kashmir Valley on Monday as schools catering to Classes 9th to 12th reopened after a prolonged 73-day winter vacation, bringing an end to one of the longest seasonal breaks in the region.

According to Kashmir News Observer (KNO), the [Turn on Page 2](#)

## 'Prahaar' Marks India's First Comprehensive Counter-Terror Doctrine

Government unveils seven-pillar, intelligence-led strategy rooted in zero tolerance, technology vigilance and global cooperation

HT NEWS DESK / AGENCIES

**NEW DELHI, FEB 23:** In a significant policy shift aimed at strengthening national security, the Government of India on Monday unveiled the coun-

try's first comprehensive counter-terrorism policy titled "Prahaar", outlining a multi-layered framework built on intelligence-led prevention, zero tolerance and coordinated response mechanisms. The policy, released by the

Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), sets out a seven-pillar strategy to counter terrorism emanating from within and outside the country. These pillars include prevention, swift response, capacity building, adherence [Turn on Page 2](#)

## Road Accidents Decline 13% Over Three Years To 5,287 In 2025

HT NEWS NETWORK

**JAMMU, FEB 23:** The Jammu and Kashmir government has recorded a 13.6 per cent decline in road accidents over the past three years, with the number of incidents falling from 6,120 in 2023 to 5,287 in 2025, officials said on Monday.

The downward trend is attributed to improved enforcement, extensive road safety awareness programmes and the strengthening of road safety mechanisms across the Union Territory. Official data show that accidents dropped to 5,276 in 2024 before further decreasing in 2025.



Several initiatives were undertaken during 2024 and 2025, including over 10,000 awareness programmes each year, health and eye check-ups of drivers, and first-aid training. The government also implemented the Good Samaritan and Road Accident Victim Fund (RAVF) schemes to provide cashless treatment for victims.

According to the officials, traffic enforcement agencies have shifted fully to the e-challan system. In 2024, authorities issued 40,197 e-challans, seized 429 vehicles and suspended 2,259 driving licences. Enforcement intensified in 2025 with [Turn on Page 2](#)

## Bharat Darshan 2026 : Kashmir Students Get Firsthand Glimpse of Governance in Delhi

Young delegation visits J&K Resident Commission to understand Centre-UT coordination and national administrative framework

HT NEWS DESK / AGENCIES

**NEW DELHI, FEB 23:** A group of 20 students from Kashmir visited the Jammu and Kashmir Resident Commission here on Monday as part of the Bharat Darshan-2026 programme, an initiative of the Ministry of Home Affairs.

The visit formed a significant component of their educational tour aimed at familiarising them with the governance and administrative systems of the National Capital. The programme is designed to broaden students' exposure beyond the Union Territory and help them understand how government institutions func-

tion at the national level. During the interaction session, held under the supervision of Additional Resident Commissioner Anil Sharma, the students were briefed about the mandate and key responsibilities of the Resident Commission. Officials explained the Commission's crucial role in liaising with Central Ministries

and national agencies, facilitating official visits, and addressing administrative matters concerning Jammu and Kashmir.

The students were also informed about the management of J&K Government properties and guest houses in Delhi, as well as the support [Turn on Page 2](#)

## Kashmir Warmer Than Spring : Valley Records Temperatures 11°C Above Normal

MeT Predicts Prolonged Dry Spell Across J&K Till February-End

HT NEWS DESK / AGENCIES

**SRINAGAR, FEB 23:** In an unusual weather pattern for February, several parts of Kashmir on Monday recorded maximum temperatures 10 to 11 degrees Celsius above normal, even as the Meteorological Department (MeT) forecast dry weather across Jammu and Kashmir till the end of the month.

According to official data, Srinagar recorded a maximum temperature of 21.0°C, nearly 10 degrees above the seasonal [Turn on Page 2](#)

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**CONTINUE FROM FRONT PAGE.....**

**Khelo India Winter.....**

Nordic skiing, snowboarding and ski mountaineering will mark the four-day event, which has drawn nearly 1,000 athletes and officials from various states and Union Territories.

Chief Minister Omar Abdullah, senior ministers, legislators, civil and police officials, representatives of the Sports Authority of India and prominent sports persons attended the inaugural ceremony. The Games will conclude on February 26, with organisers stating that success will be measured not merely by medals, but by the spirit of unity and excellence displayed on the slopes.

**Omar Abdullah.....**

resort is both deliberate and sustained. "It is not merely our intention but our full effort to develop Gulmarg into an international ski destination," Abdullah said, adding that such a transformation would boost sports while strengthening the region's tourism-driven economy.

Welcoming athletes, officials and guests from across the country to the "beautiful flowery valley," he pointed to the unpredictability of weather conditions. "A few weeks ago, we witnessed intense cold here. Today, there is unexpected warmth, making skiing challenging. We may have to make some adjustments," he remarked.

Referring to international winter sporting events, Abdullah congratulated India's alpine skier Arif Khan for representing the country on the global stage and expressed hope that a new champion would emerge from the current edition of the Games.

"It is a matter of regret that despite our vast population, we have not secured a medal at the Asian Winter Games or the Winter Olympics. I hope one among you will change that narrative," he told the participants.

Highlighting climate variability as a major challenge, the Chief Minister said reliance solely on natural snowfall was no longer sustainable. He suggested that future editions of the Games should be scheduled based on adequate snowfall rather than fixed well in advance.

Calling for long-term infrastructure development, Abdullah emphasized the need for artificial snow generation systems in Gulmarg. "I understand there are concerns about water and electricity usage, but without such infrastructure, a day may come when we may not even be able to ski here," he cautioned.

He also underlined the livelihood dimension of winter tourism, noting that sledge operators, ski guides, instructors and ATV drivers depend heavily on snowfall for their income. "It is our duty to provide the means and infrastructure that promote tourism and ensure its sustenance," he said.

Encouraging athletes to embrace the spirit of sportsmanship, the Chief Minister concluded, "Winning is not as important as participating. You have come here to participate, and we thank you for that."

Several senior officials, sports administrators and dignitaries were present at the ceremony, marking another milestone in Jammu and Kashmir's efforts to establish itself as a premier winter sports destination.

**18-Month Manhunt.....**

According to officials, the seven-member module had infiltrated into Indian territory in April 2024 and had since been involved in multiple engagements with security forces. "The group was tracked and engaged on 17 occasions. Over the last year and a half, all its members have been neutralised. Sunday marked the successful culmination of this sustained operation," Tuti told reporters.

Describing the outfit as a "hardcore terrorist module," the IGP said it had inflicted damage on both security personnel and civilians. Acting on specific intelligence inputs, forces tracked down the remaining Terrorists and eliminated them in a coordinated assault in difficult mountainous terrain.

The counter-terror operation, codenamed Operation Trashi-I, was launched on January 14 in the Chhatroo area by troops of the Counter-Insurgency Force Delta under the aegis of the White Knight Corps. Contact with the Terrorists was first established on January 18, leading to the busting of a hideout. One Terrorist, identified by the code name Adil, was killed on February 4, while the remaining three were re-engaged and neutralised on February 22 after an intense exchange of fire.

General Officer Commanding of CIF Delta, A P S Bal, said the operation demonstrated high tactical precision and close coordination among the Army, Jammu and Kashmir Police, and the CRPF. Despite snow, rain, landslides and steep slopes, forces maintained relentless pressure, using drone surveillance, night-vision devices and swift troop mobilisation. No casualties were reported among security personnel.

During the search operations, three AK-47 rifles and other war-like stores were recovered. Officials said operations were carried out simultaneously in Udhampur and Kishtwar sectors.

Major General Bal issued a warning to anti-national elements, asserting that anyone posing a threat to national security would be identified and neutralised. The IGP also said that action would be taken against those who provided shelter or logistical support to the Terrorists.

Tuti added that only three local Terrorists remain active in Kishtwar district and credited civilian cooperation for the success of recent operations. "The public stands with us. Most intelligence inputs come from civilians. Their support has been crucial," he said.

Security agencies indicated that further operations are in the pipeline as part of an intensified campaign to dismantle the remaining terror ecosystem in the region.

**Bharat Taxi to.....**

business you do, your minimum should be fixed. Anything above that must come back to you."

The minister said 80 per cent of the platform's profits would be returned to drivers based on kilometres driven, while the remaining 20 per cent would be retained as cooperative capital. Drivers can become co-owners by purchasing a Rs 500 share, with representation on the board of directors as membership expands.

Drawing comparisons with the cooperative dairy giant Amul, Shah described Bharat Taxi as an attempt to replicate the producer-owned model in the mobility sector. "In a private company, profit goes to the owner. In Amul, it goes back to the producer. Bharat Taxi is the same concept," he said.

Currently operational in Delhi-NCR and Rajkot after a two-month pilot, the platform aims to expand to all municipal corporation cities within three years. Shah said the full profit-sharing structure would take time to stabilise and urged drivers to remain patient during the initial phase.

In a move aimed at enhancing women's safety, Shah announced the introduction of a "Saarathi Didi" feature in the app, enabling women passengers travelling alone to prioritise female drivers.

Bharat Taxi will also establish a three-tier grievance redressal system — online, physical centres, and call support — to address drivers' complaints. All policy changes, Shah assured, would be communicated at least a week in advance.

The cooperative platform, backed by eight leading cooperative organisations, currently charges no commission from drivers, diverging sharply from the 25-30 per cent commission model followed by companies such as Ola Cabs, Uber and Rapido.

With its promise of income security, profit-sharing and driver ownership, Bharat Taxi seeks to position itself as a worker-centric alternative in India's rapidly expanding app-based transport market.

**Valley Schools.....**

School Education Department (SED) had scheduled winter vacations for secondary and senior secondary classes from December 11, 2025, to February 22, 2026, in the Kashmir Division and winter zones of Jammu Division.

The winter break had been announced in a phased manner on November 25 last year. As per the official order, vacations for Pre-primary (Balvatika) classes began on November 26 and will continue until February 28, 2026. For students up to Class 8th, the break commenced on December 1 and will also conclude on February 28.

Meanwhile, teaching staff were directed to remain available for academic-related duties during the vacation period and were instructed to report back to their respective institutions on February 20 to ensure smooth reopening arrangements.

Earlier, degree colleges across the Kashmir Valley resumed classes on February 16 following a 52-day winter vacation. The Higher Education Department had declared winter holidays for colleges in the Kashmir Division and winter zones of Jammu from December 24, 2025, to February 14, 2026.

With both schools and colleges now operational, educational institutions across the Valley have returned to routine functioning after the extended winter recess.

**'Prahaar' Marks.....**

to human rights and rule of law, addressing conditions that enable radicalisation, shaping international cooperation and promoting recovery and resilience through a whole-of-society approach.

Describing India's stance as "proactive" and "intelligence-guided," the document underscores the primacy of intelligence gathering and real-time information sharing to neutralise threats before they materialise. The operationalisation of the Multi-Agency Centre (MAC) and the Joint Task Force on Intelligence (JTFI) under the Intelligence Bureau (IB) has been highlighted as the nodal platform for seamless coordination between central and state agencies.

Without naming any country, the policy refers to instability in India's neighbourhood and instances where terrorism has been used as an instrument of State policy. At the same time, it reiterates that India does not link terrorism to any specific religion, ethnicity,

nationality or civilisation, maintaining that there can be no justification for violence.

The document points to continuing threats from cross-border terrorism and global extremist outfits such as Al-Qaeda and Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), which it says have attempted to incite violence in India through sleeper cells and online radicalisation.

It also flags growing concerns over the misuse of technology by terrorist groups. Encrypted communication platforms, the dark web, crypto wallets, drones and cyber-attacks have added new dimensions to security challenges. The potential threat of access to CBRNED (Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear, Explosive, Digital) materials has been described as a serious concern for counter-terror agencies.

The policy notes an emerging nexus between organised crime networks and terror outfits for logistics, recruitment and financing. Law enforcement agencies have intensified operations to dismantle over-ground worker (OGW) modules, illegal arms syndicates and terror-funding channels under existing legal frameworks.

Emphasising adherence to constitutional values, the government stated that Indian anti-terror laws uphold human rights and provide multiple levels of judicial redressal. It also underlined the need to periodically update domestic legal frameworks to respond to evolving threats and ensure stronger prosecution.

Addressing the social dimensions of extremism, the document highlights government initiatives aimed at reducing poverty and unemployment in vulnerable communities to prevent exploitation by radical elements. Engagement with civil society, psychologists, legal experts and community leaders has been identified as part of de-radicalisation and reintegration efforts.

On the global stage, India reaffirmed its commitment to strengthening bilateral and multilateral cooperation, including efforts at the United Nations to designate wanted terrorists and counter the misuse of information and communication technologies for extremist purposes.

With "Prahaar", the government has sought to institutionalise a comprehensive national doctrine that integrates intelligence, technology, legal reform and societal participation — signalling a decisive and structured approach to confronting terrorism in all its forms.

**Road Accidents.....**

52,543 e-challans issued, 1,528 vehicles seized and 1,641 driving licences suspended. Additionally, 10,439 vehicles were blacklisted and 1,192 registration certificates were cancelled in 2025.

Preventive measures included an audit of 4,545 registered school buses in 2025. Officials found that 472 buses were defective, 450 of which rectified the issues following formal notices. Similarly, 102 driving training schools were inspected, with 81 found compliant while 21 were served notices, the officials said, adding that speed-limiting devices are also being checked during vehicle fitness certification.

The road safety policy, originally notified in 2016, was revised in 2025 to align with the national standards on the recommendations of the Supreme Court Committee on Road Safety. To bolster enforcement, the government procured 213 motorcycles, 19 mobile interceptor vehicles, 16 highway patrol vehicles, 23 cranes, 685 body-worn cameras, 64 breath alcohol analysers and other traffic control infrastructure through the Road Safety Fund, they said.

The Legal Metrology Department inspected 218 helmet sellers to ensure the sale of BIS-marked helmets, booked 69 cases and seized 4,750 substandard helmets.

Intelligent Traffic Management Systems are now operational in Jammu and Srinagar under the Smart City Mission. A 107.32-crore rupee project covering 25 junctions and 188 corridors has been planned for the rest of the Union Territory, the officials said, adding that further road safety audits are now mandatory for new road projects.

The officials said compensation under the RAVF remains Rs 1 lakh for death, Rs 75,000 for permanent disability, Rs 50,000 for grievous injury and Rs 10,000 for minor injury.

The Jammu and Kashmir Road Transport Corporation (JKRTC) continues to provide services to remote and interstate areas. While there is a proposal for an e-bus from Jammu to Patnitop and Sudmahadev-Mant-alai, officials deemed it presently "not feasible" due to a lack of charging infrastructure beyond Udhampur.

The JKRTC currently operates 20 electric buses on city routes with a 100-kilometre range, though a proposal to procure 200 more electric buses under the PM e-Drive scheme is underway, they said.

**Bharat Darshan.....**

services extended to citizens and officials from the Union Territory. The importance of institutional representation in safeguarding J&K's interests at the national level was highlighted during the session.

The interaction was marked by active participation from the students, who expressed keen interest in understanding governance mechanisms and the functioning of administrative institutions in the capital.

Officials reiterated the Resident Commission's commitment to promoting youth engagement initiatives aimed at strengthening awareness about governance, national integration and public service.

The visit concluded with a group interaction and exchange of best wishes for the students' future endeavours.

**Kashmir Warmer.....**

average. Qazigund registered 21.2°C, 11.1 degrees above normal, while Pahalgam settled at 17.3°C, almost 9.8 degrees above normal. Kupwara recorded 20.6°C and Kokernag 19.0°C, both more than 10 degrees above average.

The ski resort of Gulmarg, typically covered in snow during this period, recorded a maximum of 11.2°C, over 9 degrees above normal, reflecting the broader warming trend across the Valley.

In the Jammu division, Jammu city recorded 25.0°C, 2.7 degrees above normal. Banihal registered 20.2°C, while Batote and Baderwah recorded 19.4°C and 20.1°C respectively. Katra also reported a high of 25.0°C, nearly five degrees above normal.

In Ladakh, Leh recorded 7.0°C, Kargil 9.3°C and Nubra Valley 11.1°C.

The MeT Department said no major rain or snowfall is expected across the Union Territory till February 26, with generally dry weather likely to prevail. On February 27 and 28, partly to generally cloudy conditions are expected, with light rain or snowfall at isolated places.

For the first week of March, the department has forecast partly to generally cloudy weather from March 1 to 3, with chances of light precipitation over higher reaches. Weather is expected to remain partly cloudy from March 4 to 7.

Advising farmers to continue farm operations, the department said both minimum and maximum temperatures are likely to rise further at most places over the next five days.

**Hydropower control back on J&K Assembly agenda**

**HT NEWS NETWORK / KNO**

**JAMMU, FEB 23:** A crucial resolution seeking the transfer of National Hydro-electric Power Corporation-owned projects in Jammu & Kashmir to the Union Territory Government is set to be taken up in the J&K Assembly during the second leg of the budget session, beginning March 27.

The resolution, submitted by NC MLA Sajad Shaheen, as per news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), will be listed in business of the House on April 2—one of the two days fixed for Private Member Resolutions.

The resolution is among the 14 resolutions selected through balloting for listing in business of the House. "This House resolves to recommend that the Gov-

ernment of India may be urged to consider, in consultation with the Union Territory Government and other stakeholders, a phased and mutually agreed transfer of operational control and/or ownership rights of the hydro-electric power projects presently operated by NHPC within the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir to the UT Government, in accordance with constitutional provisions and existing inter-governmental arrangements," reads the resolution.

The mild-worded resolution is expected to be the centre of attention during the second part of the budget session, given its significance for the economy and polity of J&K.

"I expect that all parties would support my resolution," NC's Sajad Shaheen told KNO.

In the past, J&K's regional parties made the return of power projects a top priority in their manifestos but failed to achieve anything substantial. In their Agenda of Alliance, the PDP BJP coalition promised that the "State Government will work with the Union Government to explore modalities for transfer of Dulhasti and Uri hydro power projects to J&K as suggested by the Rangarajan Committee Report and the Round Table reports."

The issue also featured in the manifesto of the National Conference for the 2024 Assembly polls, which states: "Impress upon the Union of India to implement the recommendations of the C. Rangarajan Committee report in letter and spirit. All other hydro power projects be transferred to Jammu and Kashmir as per agreement(sic).—(KNO)

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## DC Srinagar Reviews Plan for Specially Abled Students

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

**SRINAGAR, FEB 23:** In a significant initiative aimed at enhancing academic and technical opportunities for specially abled students of Government Abhinandan Home, a meeting was convened under the chairmanship of Deputy Commissioner (DC) Srinagar, Akshay Labroo, at the Meeting Hall of the DC Office Complex.

The meeting was attended by Chief Planning Officer, Fayaz Ahmad Dar; District Social Welfare Officer, Dr. Mukhtar Ahmad; Nodal Principal Colleges, Kashmir Division, Prof. Seema Naaz; Principal, Government Polytechnic College Gogji Bagh/Bemina, Principal, ITI Baghi Dilawar Khan/Bemina, Chief Medical Officer Srinagar, Chief Education Officer, Principal, Rural Self Employment Training Institute (RSETI); Deputy Director Employment Srinagar; and Assistant Director Handicrafts & Handloom Sri-



nagar.

The detailed deliberations were held on a proposal to broaden academic and technical avenues for students of Abhinandan Home, a special school catering to children with hearing, speech and visual challenges.

Comprehensive discussions were held regarding the need to set up higher education academic facilities, introduction of vocational training, skill development programmes, and trade diploma courses through ITIs to strengthen educational pathways for specially-abled students. The participants also emphasized the need for structured support systems to enhance career prospects and ensure holistic development of children with special needs.

On the occasion, the DC stressed the importance of empowering students of Abhinandan Home with improved access to academic education, technical training, and sustainable career opportunity.

## Students Return to Schools with Renewed Enthusiasm After Winter Break

■ JAVAID BHAT

**KUPWARA, FEB 23:** After the conclusion of the winter vacation, schools across the winter zone of Jammu and Kashmir reopened amid scenes of joy and renewed academic spirit. An encouraging and vibrant response was witnessed, where students returned to their institutions with remarkable enthusiasm.

In Kupwara district, school campuses came alive once again with smiling faces, lively interactions, and a strong sense of purpose. Students of Classes 9th to 12th showed exceptional eagerness, as these classes are crucial for their academic careers. Many students expressed their determination to work



hard and perform well in the upcoming examinations.

Teachers warmly welcomed the students and immediately resumed academic activities. Assemblies were conducted with motivational messages, encouraging students to remain focused and disciplined. Schools in the district reported impressive attendance, reflecting the seriousness of students and the supportive role of parents.

The winter silence that had enveloped the schools was replaced by an atmosphere of learning, hope, and positivity. Both teachers and students appeared committed to making the academic session productive and successful.

As per the scheduled calendar, elementary classes will resume from March 2, and necessary preparations are underway to ensure a smooth and welcoming environment for younger students as well.

The reopening has not only restored academic routine but also rekindled the spirit of learning among students, particularly in Kupwara, where the enthusiasm remained exceptionally high.

## Daughter of the Soil Mesmerizes Audience with Santoor Recital at Rashtrapati Bhavan

■ FAROOQ RATHER

**NEW DELHI, FEB 23:** In a moment of immense pride for Jammu and Kashmir's cultural fraternity, noted Santoor maestro Dr. Veethika Tikoo delivered a spell-binding recital at the prestigious Rashtrapati Bhavan in New Delhi, captivating an eminent gathering with her mastery over Indian classical and Sufiyana music traditions. Dr. Tikoo, widely recognized for her excellence in classical and Sufiyana Santoor playing, was invited by the Ministry of Culture, Government of India, to perform at a high-profile event attended by the President of Bharat, Droupadi Murmu, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, and the President of Brazil, Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, along with a distinguished delegation participating in the AI Impact Summit.

Hailing from Jammu and Kashmir, Dr. Veethika Tikoo has earned a distinguished reputation in the field of Indian classical music and holds the rare distinction of being the youngest and the only female Santoor Vadika to represent and promote the rich musical heritage of the region at such prestigious national and international platforms. Her perfor-



mance at Rashtrapati Bhavan is being widely celebrated as a significant cultural milestone.

A highly accomplished artist, Dr. Tikoo has performed extensively across India and abroad. She also holds the distinction of being the first Santoor Vadika to perform at the European Parliament, further cementing her place as a global ambassador of the Santoor and the musical traditions of Jammu and Kashmir. During the recital, she was accompanied by accomplished musicians — Saubhagya Gandharv on flute and Nageshwar Lal Karan on tabla. The ensemble presented a captivating selection of Indian classical ragas, including Hamsadhvani, Yaman, Chandrakauns, and Pahadi. The harmonious interplay between Santoor, flute, and tabla created a rich and immersive musical experience for the distinguished audience.

The performance concluded with a beautifully synchronized classical ensemble, showcasing the depth and elegance of India's musical heritage. Through her artistry, Dr. Veethika Tikoo not only highlighted the soulful essence of the Santoor but also brought national recognition to the vibrant cultural traditions of Jammu and Kashmir.

Her presentation at Rashtrapati Bhavan is being regarded as a proud and historic moment for the Union Territory, reaffirming the region's enduring contribution to India's classical music legacy.

## DSEK, Attends Morning Assembly at GHSS Bijbehara; Prays for Bright Academic Year 2026

Mr. Naseer Ahmad Wani Visits Schools in Anantnag, Kulgam & Pulwama; Welcomes Students with Flowers and Gifts

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

**SRINAGAR, FEB 23:** In continuation of the reopening of schools across the Kashmir Division and the declaration of 2026 as the "Year of Academic Excellence," the Director School Education Kashmir, Mr. Naseer Ahmad Wani (JKAS), today undertook visits to various schools in South Kashmir to personally welcome students and encourage them at the beginning of the new academic session.

Mr. Wani attended the morning assembly at Government Higher Secondary School (GHSS) Bijbehara, District Anantnag, where he joined students and staff in the morning prayer and prayed for the bright future of students and excellence in the academic year 2026. Prior to the assembly, he warmly welcomed students with flowers and small gifts as a gesture of encouragement and goodwill. Interacting with students, the Director enquired about their studies and constructive engagements during the winter vacations and motivated them to begin the session with renewed focus and discipline.

"The morning assembly is not merely a routine; it is a moment of collective reflection and commitment. I pray for the bright future of our students and for 2026 to truly



become the Year of Academic Excellence. Let us work with dedication, discipline and a shared vision to achieve outstanding academic outcomes," said Mr. Naseer Ahmad Wani.

Continuing his outreach programme, Mr. Wani visited District Kulgam, where he welcomed students of Higher Secondary School (HSS) Nihama on their arrival and interacted with them in a warm and encouraging manner.

Later, he proceeded to District Pulwama and visited Higher Secondary School (HSS) Letpora. During the

visit, he greeted students personally and interacted with them about their academic goals and activities undertaken during the winter break. He encouraged students to set clear academic targets and assured them of full institutional support from the department.

Reaffirming the department's commitment, Mr. Wani emphasized that collective efforts of teachers, students, parents, and administrators will be instrumental in making 2026 a landmark year for educational transformation across the Kashmir Division.

## One-Week Entrepreneurship Development Programme Inaugurated at FoA Wadura, SKUAST-K

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

**WADURA, FEB 23:** A one-week Entrepreneurship Development Programme on "Entrepreneurship Development and Management for Farmer Producer Organisations in Agri-Allied Sectors" was inaugurated at the Faculty of Agriculture (FoA), Wadura, organised by the Division of Agriculture Extension & Communication, Sher-e-Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology of Kashmir.

The programme is sponsored by the Ministry of Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises, Government of India.

The programme was inaugurated by the Chief Guest, Prof. Shakeel A. Mir, Dean, Faculty of Agriculture, Wadura, who was

warmly welcomed by the organisers.

Speaking on the occasion, Dr. Bilal H. Bhat welcomed the participants, guests, and farmers. He stated that during the training programme, farmers will be imparted skill-oriented training in food processing, honey production, and mushroom cultivation, enabling them to adopt value-added agri-enterprises.

Course Coordinator Dr. Zahoor Ahmad Shah, Assistant Professor, provided an overall view of the training programme and briefed the participants about the objectives and structure of the week-long training.

Farmers from the Rohama Farmer Producer Company, led by its CEO, are actively participating in the programme.



In his address, the Chief Guest, Prof. Shakeel A. Mir, expressed gratitude to the MSME Ministry for providing financial support for such training programmes.

He also thanked the Hon'ble Vice-Chancellor Prof. Nazir Ahmad Ganai and the Director Planning, SKUAST-K Prof. H. R. Naik for their continuous support. He empha-

sized that SKUAST-K is handholding farmers through such initiatives and highlighted that agriculture remains the strongest sector for engaging educated youth and ensuring sustainable livelihoods.

The programme proceedings were anchored by PhD Scholar Huzaifa, who also delivered the vote of thanks, acknowledging the contributions of the Chief Guest, organisers, resource persons, and participants for making the event a success.

The one-week programme will continue with expert lectures, hands-on demonstrations, and interactive sessions aimed at strengthening Farmer Producer Organisations and promoting agripreneurship in the region.

# DC Budgam inaugurates Hybrid Learning System at BHSS Kanir

## Delivers Inaugural Lecture on Periodic Table & Semiconductors

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

**BUDGAM, FEB 23:** Deputy Commissioner (DC) Budgam, Dr. Bilal Mohi-Ud-Din Bhat, today inaugurated the newly installed Hybrid Learning System at Boys Higher Secondary School (BHSS) Kanir, marking a significant milestone in the district's mission to strengthen technology-enabled and inclusive education.

On the occasion, the DC also delivered an inaugural academic lecture to the students of BHSS Kanir on the Periodic Table and Semiconductors, highlighting the importance of scientific temperament and conceptual clarity in foundational subjects. The session, conducted through the hybrid platform, demonstrated the practical utility of the system in enabling high-quality, interactive learning.

The inauguration ceremony was attended by the Chief Planning Officer, Chief Education Officer, along with other officials and faculty members.

The hybrid learning initiative represents a transformative step towards modernization of

the education sector in Budgam. With the launch of this system, more than 15 schools across the district have been successfully connected through an innovative digital platform.

Additionally, 55 ICT laboratories established in various schools have been integrated with the hybrid smart classroom learning system, substantially enhancing the district's digital education infrastructure.

The Hybrid Learning System operates on a Hub-and-Spoke model, wherein centralized studios (Hubs) equipped with advanced digital infrastructure enable subject experts and best-performing teachers to deliver live lectures. These lectures are relayed in real time to connect schools with a two-way communication interface, allowing students to interact directly with teachers, ask questions, and actively participate in discussions.

This model ensures optimal utilization of expert faculty and equitable academic access across geographically dispersed institutions.

During the visit, the DC interacted with students both virtu-



ally through the hybrid interface and physically with those present on campus. Students enthusiastically shared their experiences, aspirations, and feedback regarding the new system. Their confidence and adaptability to modern educational tools were widely appreciated.

On the occasion, the DC stat-

ed that integration of technology into the education system is being actively pursued to ensure that no student is left behind due to geographical or infrastructural limitations. He emphasized that access to quality education is a fundamental pillar of inclusive development, and the administration remains

committed to bridging learning gaps through innovative and sustainable interventions.

The DC observed that the hybrid model has been envisioned as a scalable and sustainable solution to promote academic collaboration among schools. He highlighted that through this platform, subject

experts can simultaneously deliver lectures to multiple institutions, thereby optimizing resources, improving academic outreach, and ensuring uniform quality standards.

To ensure measurable academic progress, a Learning Management System (LMS) software has also been integrated with the hybrid platform. The LMS will facilitate monitoring of attendance, tracking of lesson delivery, assessment of student performance, and measurement of learning outcomes through structured digital evaluation tools, thereby strengthening accountability and outcome-based education.

The DC underscored the importance of effective utilization of digital infrastructure and impressed upon the concerned authorities the need for regular monitoring, teacher training, and capacity building to fully realize the platform's potential. He directed that periodic evaluations be conducted to assess operational efficiency and measurable academic impact.

He further stated that continuity of education, particu-

larly during challenging circumstances, remains a priority for the district administration.

The hybrid setup was described as a proactive and resilient mechanism designed to safeguard uninterrupted learning while building a future-ready education ecosystem.

The DC reiterated that sustained efforts are being made to create an educational environment where innovation, inclusivity, and quality go hand in hand, equipping students with the necessary skills and opportunities to thrive in an increasingly digital and competitive world.

Speaking on the occasion, the Principal of BHSS Kanir expressed heartfelt gratitude to the Deputy Commissioner for facilitating the installation of the Hybrid Learning System and for delivering an inspiring academic lecture to the students. The District Administration Budgam remains steadfast in its commitment to harness technology for transforming the educational landscape of the district and ensuring that every student benefits from modern, accessible, and outcome-driven learning opportunities.

### DC Budgam launches 'e-Nigrani App' CDMIS for Real-Time Monitoring of Development Works across District

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

**BUDGAM, FEB 23:** Deputy Commissioner (DC) Budgam, Dr. Bilal Mohi-Ud-Din Bhat, today launched the 'e-Nigrani App', a Constituency Development Management Information System (CDMIS), developed for effective management and real-time monitoring of development projects across the Assembly Constituencies of District Budgam.

The 'e-Nigrani App' (CDMIS) has been conceptualized as a dedicated digital portal to streamline tracking, supervision, and reporting of constituency-level developmental works. The system aims to establish stronger coordination between Government officials and Legislators, ensuring efficient execution and timely completion of projects.

On the occasion, the DC said that the digital platform has been introduced to bring greater transparency and accountability in implementation of developmental works. Through this system, Legislators



will be enabled to monitor ongoing projects in their respective Assembly Constituencies in a structured and systematic manner.

The DC further informed that the portal has been designed to collect, compile, and securely store detailed information related to development projects, including project descriptions, funding sources, implementing agencies, timelines, financial allocations, and progress reports. Real-time monitoring features have been incorporated into the system to facilitate continuous oversight and minimize delays.

It was highlighted that the CDMIS based 'e-Nigrani App' will streamline communication between departments and public representatives, promote better planning, and support data-driven decision-making. The platform is expected to significantly enhance transparency in project implementation and strengthen institutional monitoring mechanisms across the district.

"With the launch of the 'e-Nigrani App', District Budgam has taken another step towards technology-driven governance and efficient delivery of developmental initiatives," said the DC.

The launch ceremony was attended by the Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC) Budgam, Chief Planning Officer (CPO) Budgam, Assistant Commissioner Revenue (ACR), all Sub-Divisional Magistrates (SDMs), Executive Engineer R&B, District Informatics Officer (DIO) NIC, and other senior district officers of the district.

## DM Bandipora reviews Anti-Drug Measures at NCORD Meet

### Emphasizes vigilant surveillance and coordinated action

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

**BANDIPORA, FEB 23:** District Magistrate (DM) Bandipora, Indu Kanwal Chib, today chaired a virtual meeting of the District-Level NCORD Committee to review the measures taken to curb drug abuse and related illegal activities in the district.

During the meeting, the DM called for strict and consistent enforcement by all concerned departments and stressed the need for greater coordination to effectively tackle the drug menace.

The Senior Superintendent of Police, Ajaz Ahmad Zargar, presented a detailed account of recent initiatives undertaken by the police, including detentions under the PIT NDPS Act, action in identified hotspots, and registration of new cases.

Officials from the Excise Department reported on the eradication of poppy cultivation and wild cannabis, regular naka operations and inspections. The DM directed the department to furnish details of religious ser-



mons delivered as part of awareness efforts and to further strengthen community-based sensitization initiatives.

The Drug Control Department shared updates on inspections carried out, installation of CCTV cameras and computerized billing systems at medical establishments, issuance of notices, suspension of licences, and monitoring of courier services.

The DM directed the Assistant Drug Controller to ensure close

coordination with the Police Department, actively participate in Thana Divas programmes, and conduct thorough inspections with proper sharing of data for effective monitoring. The Deputy Director Prosecution briefed the committee on the status of NDPS cases, including pending trials, acquittals, and bail matters.

The ARTO Bandipora informed the meeting about suspension of driving licences and issuance of show-cause notices. The DM took

stock of the action taken against the driving licences of offenders and directed the ARTO and Health Department to treat the matter with seriousness and ensure timely action in all such cases. A representative from the Addiction Treatment Facility Bandipora also shared details regarding registrations and ongoing treatment services.

The DM further directed the Principals of Government Degree Colleges to closely monitor the

functioning of CCTV cameras within college premises as well as in peripheral areas to ensure strict vigilance and prevent any drug-related activities. Emphasizing coordinated action and regular review, the DM urged all officers to work proactively and responsibly to make Bandipora free from the menace of drugs.

The meeting was attended by Senior Superintendent of Police Bandipora; ADC Bandipora; Zonal Director, Narcotics Control Bureau Srinagar; Secretary, DLSA Bandipora; Deputy Director Prosecution Bandipora; ACD Bandipora; Deputy DEO Bandipora; SDM Sumbal/Gurez; Principals of GDC Bandipora, Sumbal, Ajas, Hajin, Gurez and Tulail; CMO Bandipora; CAO Bandipora; MS DH Bandipora; DIO Bandipora; Assistant Drug Controller Bandipora; DYSSO Bandipora; Tehsilidars; DySPCID (SB) Bandipora; District Officer, Excise and Taxation Department Bandipora; MO, ATF Bandipora; and other concerned officers through virtual mode.

## Commissioner SMC reviews Scientific Waste Processing at Achan Facility

### Calls for strengthened environmental safeguards

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

**Srinagar, FEB 23:** Commissioner Srinagar Municipal Corporation (SMC), Faz Lul Haseeb, today conducted a comprehensive inspection of the Achan Dumping Facility to assess ongoing solid waste management operations and ensure strict adherence to scientific processing and disposal standards.

During the visit, the Commissioner undertook a detailed review of the entire waste management chain, from source-level segregation and material recovery to mechanical processing, engineered landfill operations, and environmental compliance mechanisms. He examined the functioning of leachate management systems, landfill engineering practices, environmental monitoring protocols, and the progress achieved under legacy waste bio-remediation and phased site reclamation initiatives.

Emphasizing full compliance with the Solid Waste Management Rules and established environmental norms, the Commissioner directed officials to strengthen scientific waste processing through systematic segregation, resource recovery, bio-processing, and controlled landfill management. He underscored the importance of strict environmental



safeguards, efficient utilization of machinery, real-time data-driven monitoring, and continuous operational upgrades to minimize ecological impact and safeguard public health.

Reaffirming SMC's commitment to transforming waste management infrastructure in Srinagar, the Commissioner stated that targeted and time-bound interventions will be

undertaken to enhance processing capacity, modernize infrastructure, and ensure environmentally compliant disposal practices at the Achan facility. He stressed that sustainable and technology-driven waste management remains a core priority for the Corporation. Senior officers and officials of the concerned departments accompanied the Commissioner during the inspection.

### BANDIPORA ADMIN HOLDS ANTI-DRUG DRIVES ACROSS PANCHAYATS

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

**BANDIPORA, FEB 23:** Continuing its intensified campaign under the Nasha Mukht Jammu Kashmir Abhiyan, the District Administration Bandipora today conducted a series of IEC (Information, Education and Communication) awareness programmes across multiple Panchayat Halqas of the district.

The programmes were organized in Panchayats including Ajas-D (Hajin), Markundal (Naidkhai), Nowgam-B (Nowgam), Naninara (Sumbal), Ashatn-goo Ghat (Aloosa), C.A. Khan (Arin), Brar-Gundi Dachina (Bandipora), Bonakoot-A (Bonakoot), and Gund Khalail (Ganastan). The events were coordinated by the respective Panchayat Secretaries in their designated Panchayat Halqas. A multi-departmental team comprising officials from Health, Police, Education, Social Welfare (DDAC), Youth Services & Sports, JKNRLM, and Excise & Taxation departments participated in the programmes.

During the sessions, Resource persons from these departments delivered awareness lectures and interacted with participants to sensitize them about the growing menace of substance abuse.

A similar anti-drug awareness programme was held at Bus Adda Nusso by the Assistant Regional Transport Office (ARTO) Bandipora, wherein drivers, conductors and commuters were sensitized about the ill effects of drug abuse and the legal consequences associated with the transportation and consumption of narcotic substances. The programmes witnessed active participation from local residents, youth, and members of the community, who engaged in meaningful discussions and reiterated their commitment to making their respective Panchayats drug-free under the ongoing Nasha Mukht JK Abhiyan.

# DC Srinagar Inspects 10 MVA Station for GMC Power Boost

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

**SRINAGAR, FEB 23:** Deputy Commissioner (DC) Srinagar, Akshay Labroo along with the Principal, Government Medical College (GMC) Srinagar, Prof. Iffat Hassan Shah today inspected commissioning of 10 MVA Receiving Station for Associated Hospitals under GMC.

Administrator GMC Srinagar, Mohammad Ashraf Hakak, Additional Deputy Commissioner Srinagar, Mir Imtiaz Ul Aziz, Chief Planning Officer, Fayaz Ahmad Dar, Chief Engineer SSCL, Ab Qayoom Kirmani, Executive Engineers from KPDC, R&B, and other senior officers of the District Administration and GMC Srinagar were present in the spot review.

During the visit, the DC and the Principal GMC lauded the concerned Officers and Engineers for timely commissioning of the receiving station which will augment the uninterrupted & seamless power supply of SMHS hospital, Super Speciality hospital, Dental College and Nursing College under the GMC Srinagar, ensuring improved healthcare services and operational efficiency.



During the visit, the DC and the Principal lauded the officers and engineers for the timely commissioning of the receiving station. The new 10 MVA facility is expected to significantly augment uninterrupted power supply to SMHS Hospital, Super Speciality Hospital Shireen Bagh, as well as the Dental College and Nursing College under GMC Srinagar.

On the occasion, the DC was apprised that three 11kv outgoing feeders are emanating from newly commissioned receiving station to ensure reliable, smooth and uninterrupted power supply to these dedicated major Health facilities in Srinagar.

The DC & the Principal, GMC also inspected the Hostel block of GMC for its development, landscaping and improved lighting.

The DC assured the GMC administration of all possible support from the District Administration to strengthen healthcare infrastructure and improve patient care and service delivery, especially of issues, that require inter-departmental coordination at district level with the objective of enhancing the functionality of all associated hospitals.

## Transfer of IAS Officer Athar Aamir Shafi Khan Sparks Public Disappointment in Kulgam

■ FAROOQ RATHER

**KULGAM, FEB 23:** The transfer of Deputy Commissioner Athar Aamir Shafi Khan (IAS) from Kulgam has triggered widespread disappointment among residents, civil society members, and local stakeholders, who described his tenure as a period marked by accessibility, responsive governance, and administrative dynamism.

Athar Aamir Shafi Khan, an IAS officer known for his proactive style of administration, served the district during a time when several developmental and public welfare initiatives were underway. His transfer, officially announced as part of routine administrative reshuffling, has nonetheless left many citizens expressing concern over the continuity of the momentum established during his tenure. During his time as Deputy Commissioner, Khan was widely regarded as a people-oriented administrator who prioritized direct engagement with the public. Regular field visits to remote and far-flung areas of the district, surprise inspections of government offices, and interactive grievance redressal camps were among the hallmarks of his functioning. Residents say that these initiatives fostered a renewed sense of accountability within various departments and ensured that public issues were addressed in a timely manner.

Local representatives and community leaders noted that his open-door policy made it easier for ordinary citizens to approach the administration without hesitation. From land and revenue matters to infrastructure concerns, welfare scheme implementation, and essential service delivery, people felt that their grievances were heard with seriousness and empathy. Many acknowledged that under his leadership, coordination among departments improved significantly, leading to faster execution of developmental works.

Social activists also pointed out that his tenure saw strengthened monitoring of ongoing projects, with a focus on transparency and quality control. Frequent review meetings and on-ground supervision reportedly accelerated the progress of key infrastructure initiatives across the district. In addition, his emphasis on public outreach helped bridge the gap between the administration and the people, especially in areas that had long struggled with accessibility and service delivery challenges.

While acknowledging that transfers are a normal feature of bureaucratic service, residents expressed hope that the positive administrative culture cultivated during his tenure would continue under the incoming leadership. Many extended their best wishes to Khan for his future assignment, recognizing his efforts and contributions toward the district's development.

As Kulgam prepares for a new phase of administrative leadership, the prevailing sentiment among the public reflects not just the departure of an officer, but the farewell of an administrator who, in the eyes of many, embodied responsiveness, professionalism, and a genuine commitment to public service.

## Special Market Checking Drive conducted in Handwara Town, ₹6,800 fine imposed

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

**KUPWARA, FEB 23:** On the directions of Deputy Commissioner Kupwara, the Additional Deputy Commissioner, (ADC), Handwara, Javed Naseem Masoodi along with officials from the Revenue Department, Food Department, Municipal Committee, Police and members of the Traders Federation Handwara, conducted a special market checking drive across the sub division today.

During the inspection, several violations related to market regulations and hygiene standards were detected. A fine of approximately ₹6,800 was imposed on erring shopkeepers, while one shop was sealed for serious violations.

Speaking on the occasion, The ADC stated that such inspection drives will continue regularly to ensure strict compliance with rules and to safeguard public health. He also directed bakery unit owners to install CCTV cameras in their processing units within two days.

Meanwhile, the General Secretary of the Traders Federation Handwara, appreciated the administration's initiative and urged all shopkeepers to maintain proper hygiene and strictly follow regulations.

The drive aims to improve sanitation standards and promote fair trade practices in the market.

## Joint Director Agriculture Inputs inaugurates sale of Vegetable Seedlings at Kitchen Garden Lalmandi

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

**SRINAGAR, FEB 23:** Joint Director Agriculture Inputs today inaugurated the sale of high-quality vegetable seedlings at the Kitchen Garden Scheme, Lalmandi, Srinagar.

The initiative aims to promote kitchen gardening, encourage self-sufficiency in fresh vegetables among urban and peri-urban households, and support sustainable agricultural practices in the region.

The event underscored the department's ongoing efforts to make quality planting material accessible to the public at subsidized rates, enabling residents to cultivate nutritious vegetables in their home gardens. The distribution and sale drive is part of the broader Kitchen Garden Scheme, which has been instrumental in boosting household vegetable production and reducing reliance on market supplies.

Speaking on the occasion, the Joint Director Agriculture Inputs



emphasized the importance of such initiatives in promoting urban agriculture and healthy eating habits. He urged the public, particularly kitchen garden holders from Srinagar and adjoining areas, to actively participate and avail the opportunity to procure certified seedlings for timely planting.

On the occasion, Deputy Director

central, Qazi Showkat; Seed Production Officer, Ajaz Ahmad Mir along with several senior officers of the Agriculture Production and Farmers Welfare Department were present. Their participation highlighted the collaborative approach of the department in implementing farmer-centric and community-oriented programs.

## PM Vishwakarma awareness programme held at Shopian

Focus on business growth & financial empowerment of artisans

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

**SHOPIAN, FEB 23:** A one-day PM Vishwakarma Awareness-cum-Capacity Building Programme on Business Management, Financial Literacy and E-Commerce was

organised today by the BR-SME Development and Facilitation Office, Srinagar under the Ministry of MSME, Government of India, in collaboration with the District Administration Shopian at Conference Hall, Shopian.

Additional District Development Commissioner (ADDC) Shopian, Dr. Nasir Ahmed Lone attended the programme as



Chief Guest and underscored the significance of the PM Vishwakarma scheme in empowering traditional artisans and craftspeople by enhancing their skills, providing financial assistance and facilitating market linkages. He stressed that such initiatives

will not only preserve traditional crafts but also strengthen the local economy by promoting self-reliance and entrepreneurship.

Principal, Polytechnic College Shopian, emphasized the role of technical education and skill development in upgrading the

capabilities of local artisans. He assured institutional support for training and capacity building initiatives.

Assistant Director, MSME, Tariq Ishtiaq highlighted various components of the PM Vishwakarma scheme, including skill upgradation, toolkit incentives, credit support and digital transaction incentives and encouraged artisans to avail maximum benefits under the scheme to expand and modernize their enterprises.

Imran-Ul-Amin from Islamic University of Science and Technology (IUST) Awantipora deliberated on business management strategies, financial literacy and the growing importance of

e-commerce platforms in expanding market reach. He motivated participants to adopt digital tools and innovative practices to make their ventures sustainable and competitive.

Manager, JK Bank, highlighted financial literacy, credit linkage and banking support at PM Vishwakarma programme in the district.

During the event, participants raised queries and sought guidance regarding registration and benefits under the scheme.

The officers and officials from District Industries Centre, Shopian, representatives from Banks and artisans of the district participated in the programme.

## Mission Vatsalya Bandipora organises Awareness programme at Chandaji

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

**BANDIPORA, FEB 23:** Under the ongoing "Child Marriage Free Bharat" Campaign, Mission Vatsalya (Child Protection Services) Bandipora on Monday organized an awareness and sensitization programme At Chandaji Bandipora.

The event witnessed participation from former Sarpanchs, Lumberdars, ex-ward members, ASHA and Anganwadi workers, Teachers, Aayas and community members.

On the occasion speakers highlighted the harmful impacts of child marriage, relevant laws, and the importance of prevention. Community responsibility in safeguarding child Rights, education and well-being was emphasized.

Officials stressed the serious physical, emotional, and social consequences of child marriage and encouraged immediate reporting of such cases. The Child Helpline number 1098 was promoted widely, and awareness posters were displayed in schools and Panchayats.

A resolution was adopted to prevent child marriage, enhance monitoring, and ensure community participation in protecting children. The programme concluded with a pledge to make the district free from child marriage and secure a better future for children.

## Devyani Rana Leads Youth Job Drive; Nagrota Youth Placed Nationwide

Batch Closing Ceremony of the Oberoi CSR – Arc Hospitality Institute Training Programme

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

**JAMMU, FEB 23:** In a proud and celebratory moment for Nagrota Assembly Constituency, dozens young boys and girls from Panchayats Barn, Seri Panditan, and Lower Jandyal have successfully secured placements in prestigious hospitality establishments and Restaurants across India after completing a 45-day free-of-cost training programme.

The selected candidates have been placed at reputed propert-

ties including Sarovar Hotels (Chandigarh), Welcome Hotel by ITC Hotels (Delhi), Holiday Inn (Katra), Lords Hotels & Resorts (Jammu), Vivanta Jammu, Eden, and Pracheen Indian Restaurant. The candidates will be serving in the Food & Beverage (F&B) and Front Office departments, marking a significant step forward in their professional careers.

The achievement was celebrated during the Batch Closing Ceremony of the Oberoi CSR – Arc Hospitality Institute Train-

ing Programme, conducted under the aegis of Arc Hospitality Institute as part of a dedicated skill development initiative spearheaded by Ms. Devyani Rana, MLA Nagrota. The programme was specially designed to provide free professional training to local youth, enabling them to access employment opportunities in the rapidly growing hospitality sector.

The journey began at Panchayat Ghar Ghaink in the Amb Gharota area of Nagrota Constituency, where expert trainers

from Arc Hospitality conducted structured classes, practical sessions, and field visits. Over the course of 45 days, the trainees received intensive hands-on exposure and classroom instruction designed to build both technical and soft skills essential for the hospitality industry.

Addressing these candidates along with the parents during the Batch closing Ceremony, Ms. Devyani Rana stated that the ceremony is the proud commencement of promising careers for these young participants from Nagrota." She described their success as an inspiration for others and encouraged more youth to come forward and take advantage of similar opportunities.

Congratulating the selected candidates, she extended her heartfelt best wishes for their bright future. She reiterated that skill development and employment generation remain among her highest priorities, emphasizing that empowering youth through professional training is essential for strengthening the socio-economic fabric of the constituency.

Ms. Rana further informed that this initiative marks only the beginning of many such programmes to follow. She assured that more free, employment-oriented skill development initiatives will soon be launched across Nagrota Constituency to benefit a larger section of youth. She underlined her continuous endeavour to ensure that every young individual recognizes their potential and utilizes their abilities

to build a secure and successful future while contributing meaningfully to society.

Speaking on the occasion, Chitwan Khorana, Director of Arc Hospitality Institute, congratulated the candidates and appreciated their dedication throughout the training period. She reaffirmed the institute's commitment to delivering quality education, hands-on training, and industry-oriented learning experiences to help youth build rewarding careers in hospitality.

HT EDITORIAL

For better enrolment improve facilities in government schools

Over the past few years, the Department of School Education has been taking many steps so as to improve the enrolment in the government schools located across the length and breadth of the union territory of Jammu & Kashmir. One was expecting that the situation would improve and more and more children would be buoyed to join the government schools and get admission there.

The situation about the student enrolment in the government schools has not improved but contrary to the expectations the enrolment has come down. On the other side the private schools operating in the union territory are witnessing year after year increase in the enrolment of students. It is important for the people at helm to look into the reasons for the same. Once reasons are identified then corrective measures can be taken and people would be encouraged to admit their wards in the government schools.

There is a general perception among the people that there is no accountability in the government schools and the teachers are more interested in receiving their fatty salaries rather than imparting knowledge to the students. This may be true to a certain extent and not wholly. It has been observed that the government schools located in the countryside and far-flung areas are seldom visited by the higher-ups of the education department. In such a scenario the teachers at these schools call the shots.

It is an established fact that most of the government schools are housed in rented buildings and they don't have buildings of their own. At the same time there are many facilities that are missing in the government schools and these too act as impediments in healthy enrolment of students in such schools. Not to talk of the advanced facilities hundreds of government schools are not having the facility of clean drinking water. Toilet facilities are also not available at scores of government schools and the children have to go outside while attending to nature's call.

Once all the facilities are in place in the government schools then people would be motivated to send their wards to these schools instead of the private schools. It is imperative that such facilities are put in place in all the schools irrespective of their geographical location. Developing such facilities in the government schools located in cities, towns and district headquarters is not enough and the same should be available in every government school.

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# Pension or Gamble? Rethinking the Future of Retirement Security in India

Two decades after NPS replaced OPS, the debate resurfaces over certainty, dignity and the true meaning of a welfare state



WANI NAZIR

India's identity as a welfare state rests upon a solemn promise—social security, dignity, and protection against vulnerability, especially in old age. Pension policy, therefore, is not merely a fiscal mechanism; it is a moral covenant between the state and those who dedicate their working lives to public service. The introduction of the National Pension System (NPS) in 2004 marked a historic shift, replacing the assured benefits of the Old Pension Scheme (OPS) for new government recruits. Twenty years on, the central question remains: has this shift strengthened India's welfare architecture, or weakened it?

The core strength of OPS lay in certainty. It guaranteed a defined, inflation-linked pension for life, treating retirement benefits as deferred wages earned through decades of service. NPS, by contrast, ties retirement income to market performance and annuity rates, transferring risk from the state to the individual. While such a contributory, market-linked model may align with private-sector employment, its application to public service—where employees often work under modest pay scales and demanding conditions—raises serious concerns about the erosion of welfare principles.

A welfare state is expected to shield its citizens from risks beyond their control. Market volatility, inflationary pressures, and escalating healthcare costs are precisely such risks—especially for retirees. Under NPS, even employees who have served faithfully for 30 or 40 years face uncertainty about their post-retirement income. This unpredictability appears inconsistent with the spirit of social justice and economic security envisioned in India's constitutional framework.

The growing call to restore OPS has gained momentum in states such as Punjab, Rajasthan, Himachal Pradesh, and Chhattisgarh. These decisions signal more than political calculation; they reflect a recognition that pension security directly influences employee morale, governance efficiency, and institutional trust. When two employees performing identical duties retire under entirely different pension frameworks solely because of their date of appointment, it fosters inequality and resentment—hardly the hallmark of a welfare-oriented system.

Critics argue that OPS strains public finances. Fiscal discipline is undeniably important. Yet, wel-

PENSION	GAMBLE
 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Guaranteed Security <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Stable Income <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Long-Term Peace <i>Plan for tomorrow. Relax today.</i>	 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Uncertain Returns <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> High Risk <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No Guarantee <i>Risk it all. Regret tomorrow?</i>

## Rethinking the Future of Retirement Security in India



fare commitments cannot be assessed purely through balance sheets. Pension spending represents a long-term investment in social stability and human capital. With careful planning, phased funding mechanisms, and transparent accounting, defined-benefit systems can coexist with fiscal prudence—as demonstrated by several economies worldwide. Above all, the pension debate is about trust. Public servants constitute the backbone of governance—implementing welfare schemes, maintaining law and order, and driving development initiatives. Guaranteeing them a secure and dignified

retirement reinforces the credibility of the very welfare state they help sustain. As discussions intensify across the country, there is rising expectation that the administration of Jammu and Kashmir will also examine the broader implications of pension security for its workforce. Ultimately, a welfare state must stand by those who have stood by it. The choice between certainty and uncertainty in retirement is not merely an economic decision—it is a statement of values.

Waninazir36@gmail.com

# Forests: The Green Gold That Powers the Planet

Why Protecting Our Natural Wealth Is Essential for Climate Stability, Food Security and Economic Growth



DR JAVAID AHMAD MAGLOO

Forests are not silent stretches of green confined to maps and mountain ranges. They are living engines of productivity — vast biological systems that sustain life, stabilize climate, and fuel economies. In an era defined by climate change, food insecurity, and environmental stress, forests must be recognized for what they truly are: humanity's most reliable natural asset.

Through the simple yet powerful process of photosynthesis, forests absorb carbon dioxide and convert it into life-sustaining biomass. Massive ecosystems such as the Amazon Rainforest function as planetary lungs, storing enormous quantities of carbon while nurturing unmatched biodiversity. They regulate temperatures, shape weather systems, and anchor ecological balance on a global scale.

Forests are also the backbone of natural infrastructure. They purify water, prevent floods, conserve soil, and maintain watershed systems that agriculture and communities depend upon. Remove forests, and the consequences ripple outward — rainfall



patterns shift, droughts intensify, rivers silt up, and fertile land turns fragile.

The economic dimension of forests is equally profound. Timber, paper, medicinal compounds, food products, and eco-tourism generate livelihoods for millions. Countries such as Brazil and Canada derive substantial export revenues from forest-based industries, illustrating how environmental stewardship and economic growth can go hand in hand.

But forests are more than revenue streams — they are climate stabilizers. The Congo Basin stands as one of the world's most critical carbon sinks, absorbing emissions that would

otherwise intensify global warming. Yet deforestation and degradation are releasing stored carbon back into the atmosphere at alarming rates, accelerating climate disruption.

The link between forests and food security is often underestimated. The Amazon Rainforest influences rainfall across South America, sustaining agricultural productivity far beyond its borders. Forest loss leads to declining precipitation, shrinking crop yields, and mounting threats to global food supplies. Soil erosion and topsoil depletion further weaken farming systems, compounding rural economic distress.

Equally concerning is biodiversity

loss. Forest ecosystems contain genetic resources critical for medicine and crop development. Biodiversity-rich nations such as Indonesia hold biological treasures that underpin future scientific breakthroughs. To destroy forests is to close doors to discoveries yet to be made.

Recent catastrophic bushfires in Australia offer a stark warning of the environmental and economic costs of forest degradation. Scientists caution that severe damage to the Amazon Rainforest could push it toward a savanna-like state, fundamentally altering global climate systems and agricultural markets.

Forests must therefore be treated as strategic national and global assets — central to climate protection, water security, disaster mitigation, and long-term economic stability. Conservation is not an environmental afterthought; it is a prerequisite for sustainable development.

Protecting forests demands strong policy measures, community engagement, sustainable management practices, and a shift toward green economic models. It requires recognizing that environmental wealth is not separate from economic prosperity — it is its foundation.

If forests are the planet's green gold, then safeguarding them is not merely an ecological responsibility but a moral and economic imperative. Our collective future depends on how wisely we manage this irreplaceable natural bank of productivity.

# Revinding a Prophetic Wellness Tradition

## Use Talbeena for Strength in Ramadan



■ AUBAID AHMED AKHOON

As Ramadan casts its serene shadow over Kashmir, the rhythm of life changes. Homes awaken before dawn, kitchens glow softly in the quiet hours of suhoor, and families gather at sunset with gratitude for iftar. It is a month of restraint, reflection, and renewal. Yet amid the spiritual elevation, the body too carries a responsibility — to endure long hours of fasting with strength and balance.

In recent years, our iftar tables have increasingly reflected excess rather than equilibrium. Fried foods, sugary drinks, and heavy meals often replace simplicity and nourishment. While the spirit of Ramadan calls for moderation, our eating habits sometimes lead to fatigue, acidity, and lethargy. In such a climate, reviving a forgotten Sunnah — Talbeena — may offer both guidance and healing.

Talbeena, a soft porridge prepared from barley flour cooked in milk and lightly sweetened with honey or dates, was deeply cherished in the household of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ. It was not merely food; it was comfort, remedy, and compassion served in a bowl. Narrations recorded in Sunan Ibn Majah mention that whenever a member of the Prophet's family fell ill, Talbeena would be prepared, and he ﷺ would say that it removes grief from the heart and alleviates weakness just as one washes dirt from the face with water. Similar references appear in Sahih al-Bukhari and Sahih Muslim, underscoring its soothing and restorative qualities.

What is remarkable is how this Pro-



phetic recommendation resonates powerfully with modern nutritional science. Barley, the essence of Talbeena, is one of the most balanced grains known to humankind. Rich in soluble fiber, particularly beta-glucan, it supports steady digestion and gradual energy release. For a fasting person, this slow and sustained energy prevents sudden weakness and reduces intense hunger pangs during the day. Unlike refined carbohydrates that cause sugar spikes followed by exhaustion, barley maintains stable blood glucose levels — an increasingly important benefit in a region witnessing a rise in diabetes and metabolic disorders.

Beyond energy, barley carries protective qualities for the heart. Its natural compounds help reduce harmful cho-

lesterol, supporting cardiovascular health at a time when heart disease has become alarmingly common. Its fiber content nurtures digestive health, easing common Ramadan complaints such as constipation, bloating, and gastritis. When consumed warm, Talbeena soothes the stomach gently, creating a sense of internal calm.

Equally significant is its impact on emotional well-being. The Prophet ﷺ spoke of Talbeena as something that removes grief from the heart. Today, medical research continues to explore the powerful connection between gut health and mental health — often referred to as the gut-brain axis. Whole grains like barley contribute to improved neurotransmitter balance, which influ-

ences mood stability and reduces anxiety. In a time when stress, depression, and mental fatigue quietly burden many households, the wisdom embedded in this Sunnah becomes profoundly relevant.

Talbeena also offers strength to those who feel physically drained. Its iron content supports healthy hemoglobin levels, addressing fatigue that often accompanies fasting. Its essential minerals and vitamins strengthen immunity, particularly beneficial during seasonal transitions. For students preparing for examinations in Ramadan, it provides sustained nourishment that supports concentration and memory. For the elderly and those recovering from illness, it becomes a gentle yet strengthening

tonic. Preparation itself reflects simplicity. Milk is brought to a gentle boil, barley flour is added with steady stirring, and the mixture thickens into a soft pudding. Dates or honey lend natural sweetness. Consumed warm, it carries both nourishment and comfort — neither heavy nor indulgent, but balanced and wholesome.

The deeper message, however, lies beyond the kitchen. Talbeena represents a holistic approach to health embedded within Islamic tradition. It reminds us that faith is not confined to rituals of prayer and fasting alone; it extends to how we care for our bodies, how we eat, and how we preserve our well-being. In an age dominated by packaged supplements and commercial health trends, the simplicity of barley stands as a quiet testament to timeless wisdom.

Ramadan invites believers to purify the soul, discipline desires, and revive forgotten Sunnahs. Reintroducing Talbeena into our homes is not merely about adopting a recipe; it is about reconnecting with a Prophetic lifestyle that harmonizes spiritual devotion with physical care.

As the Valley continues its fasts under long daylight hours, perhaps true strength lies not in extravagant meals but in balanced nourishment. In the humble bowl of Talbeena, there is energy for the body, calm for the heart, and continuity with a tradition that remains as relevant today as it was centuries ago.

This Ramadan, let our pursuit of spiritual elevation be accompanied by wisdom at the table — and let a forgotten Sunnah restore strength where it is needed most.

**The author is a Columnist | Motivational Speaker Associate Editor, Education Quill Manager Operations, Technoglobe Srinagar, Email: akhoon.aubaid@gmail.com**

# Munim Niyaz: Stories Rolled Inside Beats — The Voice Rising from Tral's Underground



■ AAFID HASEEB

In the quiet lanes of Tral, where mountains stand watch and tradition shapes everyday life, a new sound is steadily rising. It is not the echo of traffic or the chatter of markets, but the sharp rhythm of hip-hop — honest, restless, and fearless. At the center of this sound stands Abdul Munim, better known by his stage name Munim Niyaz, a young artist who is turning beats into stories and music into resistance.

In a place where conformity is often safer than creativity, Munim's journey feels almost revolutionary.

Born into a religious, middle-class family in Pulwama, Munim grew up in what he describes as a "religious mahool," a household deeply rooted in spirituality and discipline. In such environments, music is rarely seen as a career option. For many, it is considered unnecessary, even sinful. The path laid before him was clear — excel in studies, choose medicine, and secure a respectable future.

By the 11th grade, Munim had become the "model son." Good grades, obedient nature, and big academic dreams defined him. But behind the books and lab notes, another passion was quietly growing.

Late nights with earphones introduced him to voices that felt familiar in struggle and emotion. The sharp lyricism of Young Stunners, the fearless Kashmiri storytelling of Ahmer, and the reflective poetry of J. Cole spoke to something deeper inside him. Through them, he discovered that rap could be more than rhythm — it could be truth, therapy, and protest.

Yet, choosing music meant stepping into conflict. In many conservative



spaces, musicians are judged harshly, sometimes even equated with iblees. For Munim, however, the microphone became a sanctuary — a place where he could speak freely without fear or filters.

His journey into music began quietly in early 2021. There were no sponsors, no expensive studios, and no shortcuts. All he had was determination.

With limited pocket money, he started

saving every rupee. Each coin meant one more studio session. When he finally booked time, it was never luxurious. Two hours only. A ticking clock. No room for mistakes.

These were intense, high-pressure sprints. Munim would walk into the studio fully prepared, verses memorized, beats selected. Sometimes he recorded four songs in a single session just to justify the sacrifice. What others saw as limitations, he

turned into discipline.

That grind eventually paid off. His breakout track, Gangster Shit, spread quickly among local listeners and online circles. Raw and unpolished, the song carried the frustration and ambition of Kashmiri youth. It wasn't commercial — but it was real. And that authenticity struck a chord. Suddenly, the quiet boy from the neighborhood had a voice people were listening to.

Today, Munim balances two identities. By day, he is a student at Sri Pratap College. By night, he is an underground rapper writing verses about protest, pain, and perseverance. Books and beats exist side by side in his life.

But his music goes beyond personal ambition.

Munim sees rap as responsibility. He speaks openly about issues affecting Kashmiri youth — depression, isolation, and the growing addiction to screens and substances. He worries that real human connection is disappearing. "Even if five friends sit together, four are lost in their phones," he says. "We're forgetting how to live in the moment."

He also takes a strong stand against nasha, or drug abuse, which continues to destroy many young lives. Through his songs, he encourages strength, faith, and hard work instead of escape.

His philosophy remains simple: "Khuda gives to those who grind."

Despite criticism and social pressure, Munim remains grounded in faith and purpose. He does not see music as rebellion for fame but as storytelling for his people. Each lyric becomes a diary entry of the Valley's youth, each beat a reflection of their silent struggles.

With his upcoming release, Faded, Munim hopes to take the name of Tral beyond Kashmir and onto the national stage. For him, success means representation — showing the world that even small towns carry big dreams.

From saving pocket money for studio hours to becoming a rising underground voice, Munim Niyaz's journey is proof that passion can survive even the toughest surroundings.

And through every beat he drops, he continues to roll his stories forward — transforming silence into sound, struggle into strength, and Tral into a rhythm the world is finally beginning to hear.

**The author from Mahnoora, Chadoora, Budgam**

# HEALTH BENEFITS OF DATES



■ SAHIL MANZOOR BHATTI

Alhamdulillah! Ramadan starts on the 19th of this month. Muslims in all corners of the world are excited.

Dates are sweet, delicious, and nutritious fruits available throughout the year. They are often used in preparing different mixtures of dry fruits and other delicacies. Dates are primarily cultivated in Saudi Arabia from August to mid-November each year. Apart from Saudi Arabia, they are also grown in Egypt, Iran, the UAE, Pakistan, and several other countries.

During the holy month of Ramadan, the demand for dates rises sharply. Muslims across the world prefer to break their fast with a few dates, following the Sunnah of Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ). This practice is not only spiritually significant but also provides an instant source of natural energy after a day of fasting. In the market, various types of dates ranging from low-quality to premium varieties are available to meet the needs of customers.

■ **Nutritional Value and Fibre Content**

Dates are loaded with vitamins, minerals, and fibre. The high fibre content helps cleanse the stomach and maintain



a healthy digestive system. According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, a single pitted date contains about 1.6 grams of fibre, which is roughly six percent of the daily recommended intake.

Fibre plays a vital role in digestion it softens stool, prevents constipation, and reduces the risk of haemorrhoids. It also helps lower levels of "bad" cholesterol (LDL), combats obesity, and promotes a healthy colon, reducing the risk of colitis and colon cancer.

A review published in Critical Reviews in Food Science and Nutrition found that the insoluble fibre in dates binds to fat and cholesterol, helping remove them from the body.

■ **Heart Health**  
Eating dates is an excellent way to maintain a healthy heart. Dates are rich in potassium, which helps lower the risk of stroke and other cardiovascular dis-

eases. Combined with their ability to reduce LDL cholesterol, dates become a heart-friendly superfood. For best results, some experts recommend soaking dates overnight and eating them the next morning.

■ **Rich Source of Essential Minerals and Vitamins**  
A study published in the International Journal of Food Sciences and Nutrition (2003) described dates as "an almost

ideal food," providing a wide range of essential nutrients. Dates contain at least 15 minerals, several amino acids, and healthy fatty acids, making them beneficial for strengthening bones, preventing diseases like osteoporosis, and keeping the blood strong and healthy.

■ **Here are some key nutrients found in dates:**

■ **Potassium:** Maintains heart health, builds muscles, and regulates blood pressure.

■ **Copper:** Aids in the production of red blood cells, improves iron absorption, and prevents premature ageing.

■ **Magnesium:** Reduces inflammation, lowers blood pressure, and protects against arthritis and cardiovascular disease.

■ **Selenium:** Boosts immunity and acts as a powerful anti-cancer agent.

■ **Iron:** Essential for producing red blood cells and preventing anaemia.

■ **Vitamin B6:** Enhances brain performance and supports muscle function.

■ **Niacin (Vitamin B3):** Helps convert food into energy and supports nerve function.

■ **Vitamin A:** Keeps the eyes, skin, and mucous membranes healthy.

In conclusion, dates are not just a symbol of tradition and faith but also a nutrient-packed superfood that supports overall health. Whether eaten fresh, dried, or soaked, dates remain one of nature's most complete and beneficial gifts.

sahilmanzoor0401@gmail.com

## MS. JAASINDAH MIR

RCI-LICENSED PSYCHOLOGIST | EFT MASTER PRACTITIONER | FLOWER ESSENCE PRACTITIONER | AUTHOR

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JOIN FACEBOOK LIVE WITH Dr.SUMIT , Mr.TURAB, Former Sr. Audiologist at Max Hospital Saket ,Delhi @ Kifayatkifi 8:00PM On January 18<sup>th</sup>, Sunday

# DC Ramban discusses arrangement for SANJY 2026

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

**RAMBAN, FEB 23:** Deputy Commissioner Ramban, Mohammad Alyas Khan today chaired a comprehensive meeting to discuss the formulation of a detailed plan for ensuring smooth and safe arrangements for the Shri Amarnath Ji Yatra (SANJY) 2026 in the district.

The meeting was attended by SSP Arun Gupta; SSP Traffic NHW Raja Adil Hameed; ADC Varunjeet Singh Charak; ACD Sheraz Ahmed; CPO Dr. Shakeeb Ahmed Rather; SDM Banihal Mohammad Naseeb Bajran; besides Executive Engineers and officers of all stakeholder departments.

The Deputy Commissioner held detailed discussions on ensuring uninterrupted power and water supply, robust healthcare services, sanitation management, adequate facilities at lodgment centres, installation of



Public Address Systems (PAS) and arrangements at Langer sites. He directed all concerned departments to formulate comprehensive plans clearly outlining their respective roles and responsibilities to ensure foolproof and well-coordinated arrangements.

Emphasizing meticulous inter-departmental coordination, the Deputy Commissioner stressed the need to ensure comprehensive planning for seamless arrangements, particularly at key locations including Yatra Camp Lamber (Banihal), SASB Yatri Niwas and Langer Site Chanderkote. He also reviewed the security and traffic management plan to ensure the safety of pilgrims and facilitate smooth movement of Yatris and vehicles along the National Highway.

The Deputy Commissioner further directed the SDM Banihal to convene a meeting of all concerned officers at Banihal to ensure timely execution of arrangements at the field level. The SSP Ramban and SSP Traffic also suggested various measures and the DC instructed all officers to incorporate the suggestions and departmental inputs into their respective action plans.

Executive Engineers of JPDCL, Jal Shakti and PWD were directed to ensure uninterrupted power supply, adequate potable water and maintenance of essential infrastructure. The ACP along with the CEOs and EOs of Municipal Committees were instructed to prepare a robust sanitation and solid waste management plan to ensure hygienic upkeep of all Yatra-related sites.

# Doda admin bids farewell to outgoing Deputy Commissioner

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

**DODA, FEB 23:** District administration Doda on Monday accorded a warm and heartfelt farewell to outgoing Deputy Commissioner (DC), Harvinder Singh. Singh has been transferred and appointed as Director Employment Jammu and Kashmir.

The event witnessed the presence of DDC Chairperson Dhananther Singh, Vice Chairperson Sangeeta Bhagat, DDC members, senior officers from the line departments, representatives from the civil society, senior citizens and staff members.

Speakers highlighted the developmental initiatives undertaken under the guidance of Harvinder Singh, particularly in infrastructure development, strengthening of public service delivery, promotion



of tourism and effective implementation of government schemes at the grassroots level.

Harvinder Singh expressed his sincere thanks to the officers, employees and the people of Doda for their cooperation and unwavering support. He stated that the collective efforts of the administration and the public played a crucial role in achieving developmental milestones and strengthening governance in the district.

## Public Notice

This is for the information of the general public that the Electricity Connection of Jammu and Kashmir Power Development Corporation Limited (JKPDCL) bearing Consumer ID No. 0122040003552 and the Water Connection Agreement of Jal Shakti Department (PHE Department), installed at my residential house situated at Dolipora, Kreeri, District Baramulla, are presently recorded in the name of my grandfather:

Haji Ab Gani Mir S/o Mohammad Subhan Mir  
R/o Dolipora Kreeri, District Baramulla  
That my grandfather has expired, and after his death, I am in possession and occupation of the said house. Therefore, I request the concerned departments to transfer the above-mentioned electricity and water connections into my name:

Sharif Ud Din Mir  
S/o Gh Mohammad Mir  
R/o Dolipora Kreeri, District Baramulla  
I hereby undertake to pay all outstanding dues, if any, against the said connections after the death of my grandfather.

If any person has any objection regarding the proposed transfer of the above connections, he/she may file objections before the concerned authorities within 7 days from the date of publication of this notice. After that, no objection shall be entertained.

Place: Kreeri  
Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

Sharif Ud Din Mir  
S/o Gh Mohammad Mir  
R/o Dolipora Kreeri  
District Baramulla

## Public Notice

It is to inform the general public that I have lost the RC of my vehicle bearing registration number- JK01BA 7065. Now I want to apply for its duplicate, anybody having any objection may contact RTO Srinagar within the period of 7 days of this notice.

Arifat Jan  
W/O- Zahoor Ahmad Malik  
R/O- Srinagar  
Phone no- 9013725726

## Public Notice

My Name has wrongly written in my Class 10th marks card as Hazim Bilal S/O Bilal Ahmad Shan while my actual name is Hazim Bilal S/O Bilal Ahmad Shah, Now I want to correct it.

If any body have any objection in this regard He/She can contact BOSE within aperiod of seven days ,After that no objection will be entertained.

Name:-Hazim Bilal  
S/O Bilal Ahmad Shah

## Public Notice

My Son's name has been wrongly mentioned as ZOHAIB GANAIE S/O ASHIQ AHMAD GANAIE in his Date of Birth certificate issued by SDH kreeri while her correct name is AZHAAN GANAIE S/O ASHIQ AHMAD GANAIE which needs to be corrected if anybody having any objection in this regard he/she may file his/her objection in the office of BMO / SDH kreeri within seven days from the publication of this notice after that no objection will be entertained

Name....ASHIQ AHMAD GANAIE  
F/O...AZHAAN GANAIE  
R/o...WATERGAM WAGOORA

## Public Notice

This is for information of general public that the (Electric bill ) power connection is registered on the name AB RASHID MIR S/O GH AHMAD MIR R/O SALOOSA Now this Connection bearing Consumer ID NO 0212040008285 wants to be registered on my correct name GH RASOOL GANIE S/O GH AHMAD GANIE R/O SALOOSA .If anybody have any objection in this regard He/She may file his/her objection in the concerned PDD office within seven days from the date of publication of this notice after that no objection will be entertained

Name..GH RASOOL GANIE  
S/O ... GH AHMAD GANIE  
R/O .....SALOOSA

## Government Of Jammu & Kashmir Office Of The Tehsildar Kreeri

Subject: Application SHIJA UL BASHIR HAJAM & KHALID BASHIR HAJAM S/O BASHIR AHMAD HAJAM R/O KREERI Tehsil KREERI for the issuance of OBC ( Other Backward classes ) in favor of applications

### PUBLIC NOTICE

Regarding the subject cited above the file in the office of the undersigned for the issuance of OBC in this connection a report of patwari halqa concerned has been sought which reveals that the applicant is currently residing in the village of KREERI of Tehsil KREERI and belongs to the HAJAM community having annual income 514848 // ( Five lack fourteen thousand eight hundred forty eight ) the details of family of the applicant are as follows

- 1...BASHIR AHMAD HAJAM Father 65 years Retired govt employee
- 2.SHAMEEMA BEGAM Mother 60 years Housewife
- 3... KHALID BASHIR applicant 32 years student
- 4.. SOBAYA BINT MAJID w/o KHALID 32 years H/W
- 5...MOHAMMAD IBIN KHALID S/O KHALID 04 years infant
- 6...ABIHA KHALID D/O KHALID 02 years infant
- 7...SHIJA UL BASHIR applicant 30 years private job

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

Naib Tehsild Kreeri

## Public Notice

This is for information of general public that the (Electric bill ) power connection is registered on my Grand Fathers name GHULAM PANDITH S/O GH AHMAD PANDITH R/O AUTHOORA Now this Connection bearing Consumer ID NO 0212040006289 wants to be registered on my MUDASIR HUSSAIN PANDITH S/O GH MOHAMMAD PANDITH R/O AUTHOORA .If anybody have any objection in this regard He/She may file his/her objection in the concerned PDD office within seven days from the date of publication of this notice after that no objection will be entertained

Name..MUDASIR HUSSAIN PANDITH  
S/O ... GH MOHAMMAD PANDITH  
R/O ....AUTHOORA

## Government Of Jammu & Kashmir Office Of The Tehsildar Kreeri

Subject: Application RASHID GANI MIR & MEHRAJ GANI MIR S/O ABDUL GANI MIR R/O KAKOTHAL for issuance of RBA certificate in favour of self for the issuance of RBA in his/her / their favor

### PUBLIC NOTICE

Regarding the subject cited above the file in the office of the undersigned for the issuance of RBA in this connection a report of patwari halqa concerned has been sought which reveals that the applicant is currently residing in the village of KAKOTHAL of Tehsil KREERI and belongs to the GANAI community having annual income 696560 // the details of family of the applicant are as follows

- 1..ABDUL GANI MIR Father 65 years Retire employee
- 2..TASLEEMA BEGUM MOther 55 years House wife
- 3...YASMEENA GANI sister 25 years student
- 4...RASHID GANI MIR Applicant 19 years student
- 5...MEHRAJ GANI MIR Applicant 19 years do

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

Naib Tehsild Kreeri

## Public Notice

This is for information of general public that the (Electric bill ) power connection is registered on the name AB HAMID GANIE S/L AB REHMAN GANIE R/O BARAMPORA PATTAN Now this Connection bearing Consumer ID NO 0213040008740 wants to be registered on my correct name BADUL HAMEED GANAIE S/O HABIB GANAIE R/O BARAMPORA .If anybody have any objection in this regard He/She may file his/her objection in the concerned PDD office within seven days from the date of publication of this notice after that no objection will be entertained

Name..ABDUL HAMEED GANAIE  
S/O ... HABIB GANAIE  
R/O ....BARAMPORA PATTAN

## Government Of Jammu & Kashmir Office Of The Tehsildar Kreeri

Subject: Application RASHID GANI MIR & MEHRAJ GANI MIR S/O ABDUL GANI MIR R/O KAKOTHAL for issuance of RBA certificate in favour of self for the issuance of RBA in his/her / their favor

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- 2..TASLEEMA BEGUM MOther 55 years House wife
- 3...YASMEENA GANI sister 25 years student
- 4...RASHID GANI MIR Applicant 19 years student
- 5...MEHRAJ GANI MIR Applicant 19 years do

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

Naib Tehsild Kreeri

## Public Notice

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

Name...MUSHTAQ AHMAD RATHER, F/O...ZAINAB MUSHTAQ

## Government of Jammu & Kashmir Office Of The Executive Engineer Machinery Division Kashmir Mechanical & Hospital Engineering Department, Kashmir

Fax No: 0194-2497093 | website: www.medkashmir.org

### GIST OF E-TENDER

**E-NIT NO: MDSK/TS /2025-26/101 | DATE: 23.02.2026**

For and on behalf of the Lt. Governor, J&K UT e-tenders are invited on percentage basis from eligible contractors/ registered firms for the below mentioned work

Name of the Work	Cost of Tender Doc. (In rupees)	Estimated Cost (In Rs)	Bid security (EMD) in Rs	Position of AA	Position of TS
Fitting of cutting Edges, mounting plate and other allied maintenance works to be carried out on Snow clearance machines pertaining to snow Clearance Control room Budgam of Machinery Division Kashmir .	100.00	39850.00	800.00	Works programme approved by CE vide order No. M&HED/K/ Acctt/107 of 2025-26 Dt.30.08.2025.	Sanctioned vide No. 58 of 2025-26 Dt. 21-02 -2026.

The bidding document 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 Govt. website www.jktenders.gov .in as per schedule of dates given below: -

01	Publish date	23-02-2026(18:00hrs)
02	Period of downloading of bidding document	23-02-2026 (18:30 hrs)
03	Bid submission start date	23-02-2026 (18:55hrs)
04	Bid submission end date	02-03-2026 (18:55 hrs)
05	Date and time of opening of bids (online)	03-03-2026 (14:00 hrs)

No: MDSK/ TS/6579-82 | Date: 23.02.2026

Sd/- Executive Engineer,  
Machinery Division, Srinagar

DIPK: 11271/25 | Dated: 23-02-2026

## Government of Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT DEVELOPMENT COMMISSIONER, BUDGAM

email: ddc-badgam@jk.gov.in

### INTERVIEW NOTICE

In continuation to this office Advertisement Notice No.DDCB/YUVA/9934-39 dated:01.12.2025, regarding the engagement of candidates on contractual basis under the Small Business Development Unit (SBDU) and Business Help Desks (BHDs) initiative, the candidates shortlisted by the District Level Committee are hereby informed that their interview/viva-voce shall be conducted as per the schedule given below:

- Date of Interview: 24th February 2026
- Venue: Office of the District Development Commissioner, Budgam
- Reporting Time: 10:00 AM Sharp

The list of shortlisted candidates (Annexure-A) has been prepared on the basis of points awarded as per the prescribed evaluation criteria and subsequent scrutiny by the Committee. The shortlisting is purely provisional, subject to verification of documents and certificates in original at the time of interview.

#### Important Instructions for Candidates:

1. Candidates must produce all original documents/testimonials in support of their eligibility, educational qualifications, experience certificates, and domicile/residence proof.
2. No separate call letters shall be issued. This notice shall be treated as an official intimation for interview.
3. Candidates are advised to bring one set of self-attested photocopies of all required documents along with two passport size photographs.
4. No TA/DA shall be paid for appearing in the interview.
5. Any candidate failing to produce original documents or found ineligible at the time of interview shall be disqualified without further notice.

No: DDCB/BUD/YUVA/14300-309 | Date: 20-02-2026

Sd/- Deputy Commissioner, Budgam

DIPK: 11269/25 | Dated: 23-02-2026

# 5-day capacity building programme on Inclusive, Equitable Strategies concludes at DIET Jammu

HT NEWS NETWORK

**JAMMU, FEB 23:** District Institute of Education and Training Jammu organized a five-day capacity building programme for 50 teachers on Inclusive and Equitable Strategies for Supporting Diverse Learners-- an approach aimed at strengthening inclusive and learner-centered classroom practices.

The programme was conducted under the overall guidance of Principal, R.G. Dogra and under the mentorship of Joint Director State Council of Educational Research and Training, Prof. Sindhu Kapoor.

Key themes included the Concept of Inclusion, classroom diversity and barriers, Inclusive Education Strategies, Universal Design for Learning (UDL), Holistic Progress Card (HPC), Children with Special Needs (CWSN), pedagogical and assessment adapta-



tions, digital tools for inclusion, the Prashast App and experiential activities such as "Learning with a Difference" and role-play on

"Teacher as an Empathetic Listener."

The sessions were facilitated by Programme Coordinator,

Dr. Romesh Kumar, Preeti Sharma, Dr. Jyoti Malhotra, Indu Agnotra, Neha Kalra, Akash Gupta, Bindu Kumari

and Sachin Goel. Anil Gupta (Co-ordinator) and Suniya Mehta, Lecturers at DIET Jammu ensured smooth conduct of the programme, with proceedings managed by Suniya Mehta and technical support provided by Sanjay Seth.

The training adopted an experiential methodology incorporating role plays, interactive sessions, reflective activities, games, poems and digital technology. The programme concluded with a valedictory session during which Principal GHSS Canal Road Jammu, Anita Koul shared her experiences on inclusion, inspiring participants to promote inclusive and equitable practices in their classrooms.

The Principal DIET advised the trainees to implement the learning in their schools and sensitize fellow teachers at the cluster level to ensure wider outreach and systemic impact.

## DAJ reviews progress of HADP, other key schemes in Jammu Division

HT NEWS NETWORK

**JAMMU, FEB 23:** Director Agriculture Jammu (DAJ), Anil Gupta today convened a comprehensive review meeting to take stock of the physical and financial achievements made under the Holistic Agriculture Development Programme (HADP), CAPEX, CSS and NABARD projects.

The meeting was attended by Joint Director Agriculture (Inputs), Ashwani Sharma; Joint Direc-



tor Agriculture (Extension), Sanjay Anand; Joint Director Agriculture (Farms/SLUB), Aman Jyoti Sharma; Chief Agriculture Officers of all districts of Jammu Division; Regional-level SMS; Deputy Director Planning; scheme heads; sectoral and technical officers; and officers from the CSS and Planning Sections of the Directorate.

During the meeting, detailed presentations were made highlighting scheme-wise and component-wise physical achievements, financial expenditures and progress against the approved targets under HADP projects, CAPEX, CSS and NABARD schemes. The Director held threadbare discussions to assess the pace of implementation and overall performance.

The Director also reviewed the functioning of Kisan Khidmat Ghars (KKGs) established under HADP. He assessed their activities, working mechanism, expenditure status and liabilities. The meeting deliberated upon the operational status and challenges related to the KKG Portal, Krishi Mapper, Kisan Sathi Portal and Youth Clubs. He directed all Chief Agriculture Officers to gear up the progress of Krishi Mapper and ensure timely data updation for effective monitoring and planning.

Special emphasis was laid on the promotion of Natural Farming. The Director reviewed cluster registration and expenditure under Natural Farming initiatives and directed CAOs to intensify efforts for expansion and effective implementation at the grassroots level.

The meeting concluded with a call for coordinated efforts, close monitoring and result-oriented implementation to achieve the set targets within stipulated timelines.

## MSME-DFO Jammu hosts Entrepreneurship Awareness Programme at ITI Basohli

HT NEWS NETWORK

**KATHUA, FEB 23:** Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME), Government of India, through its field office MSME-Development and Facilitation Office, Jammu, in coordination with district administration Kathua, organized an Entrepreneurship Awareness Programme (EAP) at Government ITI, Basohli today.

The programme was held under the aegis of the Ministry of MSME and under the guidance of the Joint Director, MSME-DFO, Jammu, A.K. Tamaria. More than 200 individuals, including PM Vishwakarma artisans and trainees of ITI Basohli attended the programme, reflecting growing awareness and enthusiasm among aspiring entrepreneurs.

An informative lecture on schemes of the Ministry of MSME was delivered by Assistant Director, Devender Kumar Tyagi, who elaborated on the benefits, eligibility criteria and application procedures of flagship schemes supporting micro, small and medium enterprises.

A session on entrepreneurship and its practical dimensions was conducted by Superintendent Government ITI Basohli, Archana Devi. She emphasized innovation, skill development and proactive engagement as key components for establishing and sustaining successful enterprises.

Shivang Gupta from District Industries Centre provided detailed information on the Prime Minister's Employment Generation Programme and other schemes of the UT Government, outlining the financial assistance, subsidies and incentives available to aspiring entrepreneurs.

Dheeraj Handu from Jammu & Kashmir Entrepreneurship Development Institute apprised participants about entrepreneurship development initiatives and the J&K Startup Policy, highlighting the support ecosystem, funding avenues, mentorship and incubation facilities available for startups in the region.

Additionally, a comprehensive session on financial inclusion and banking products was delivered by Director, Rural Self Employment Training Institute Kathua, Utpala Saikia who elaborated on various credit facilities, banking products and financial literacy measures aimed at empowering first-generation entrepreneurs.

## DC Kathua reviews HADP implementation; stresses enhanced beneficiary coverage and training

HT NEWS NETWORK

**KATHUA, FEB 23:** Deputy Commissioner Kathua, Rajesh Sharma today chaired a review meeting to assess progress under the Holistic Agriculture Development Programme (HADP) at the DC Office Complex.

The DC conducted a component-wise review of schemes and directed officers to intensify mobilisation drives to register more eligible farmers, youth and agri-entrepreneurs under various HADP components to achieve saturation across the district.

He emphasised providing structured training to potential beneficiaries to equip them with knowledge of the latest farming technologies, climate-resilient and high-value crops, precision farming, protected cultivation and allied activities to ensure diversified and sustainable income.

The DC also called for streamlined tracking of applications on the Kisan Sathi Portal, timely processing of cases and improved coordination with banks for prompt sanction of eligible beneficiaries.



The meeting was attended by CPO Ranjeet Thakur, CAO, CHO, CAHO, CSHO, DSO, Dy Registrar Cooperatives, other concerned officers of allied departments and banking institutions.

# Border District Rajouri secures top position nationwide in MY Bharat Budget Quest 2026

HT NEWS NETWORK

**RAJOURI, FEB 23:** District Rajouri has achieved a remarkable distinction by securing the top position nationwide in the MY Bharat Budget Quest 2026 Quiz, registering the highest number of submissions in the country. A total of 14,402 youth from the district participated in the national-level online competition.

New Delhi district ranked sec-

ond with 11,097 submissions, while East Delhi secured the third position with 8,307 submissions.

The quiz, conducted from February 3 to February 22 on the MY Bharat Portal, recorded participation of over 11 lakh youth across India. The initiative aims to promote awareness and understanding of the Union Budget among young citizens. Quiz qualifiers will now advance to the Essay Round and selected candidates will get an opportunity to inter-

act with the Prime Minister, Narendra Modi.

The achievement of Rajouri, a border district, reflects the enthusiasm and proactive engagement of its youth in national initiatives. In her Budget Speech, Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman termed this year's Budget as "Yuva-Shakti driven," highlighting the incorporation of youth suggestions received during the Viksit Bharat Young Leaders Dialogue 2026 at Bharat Man-

dapam, New Delhi.

Speaking to media persons, the Deputy Commissioner Rajouri, Abhishek Sharma described the accomplishment as the result of systematic planning and coordinated efforts. He acknowledged the vital contribution of educational institutions, including schools, Degree Colleges and Baba Ghulam Shah Badshah University, where special sessions on the Union Budget were conducted to guide participants.

"This success reflects true teamwork. Focused academic guidance and regular monitoring ensured better performance and higher participation," the Deputy Commissioner stated.

The competition, organized by the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, Government of India, will now move to the Essay Competition stage, followed by the final interaction of essay qualifiers with the Prime Minister.

## DAH Jammu reviews progress of Animal Husbandry sector schemes

HT NEWS NETWORK

**JAMMU, FEB 23:** Director Animal Husbandry (DAH) Jammu, Dr. Sanjay Gupta convened a meeting today in the Directorate's Conference Hall to review the physical and financial progress of the department's key schemes and projects across the Jammu division.

Chief Animal Husbandry Officers of all the districts of Jammu division, Dy. Director Planning, Officers from HADP Cell, Directorate of Animal Husbandry Jammu, officers from Livestock Development Board Jammu besides officers of technical and planning sections participated in the meeting.

The Director took a detailed review of the progress achieved under CAPEX, HADP, CSS and NABARD components



of the department in the Jammu division. He issued on-spot directions wherever shortfalls were noticed.

The Director called for setting up Pashu Aushadi Vikray Kendras at grassroots levels for promoting use of generic/ethno-veterinary medicines to reduce treatment costs for livestock farmers. The field Officers were directed to identify suitable cooperative societies to run these kendras.

While reviewing progress under

flagship Nationwide Artificial Insemination Programme (NAIP), the chair noticed several deficiencies in data-uploading. He directed officers to accelerate the process of data uploading on the designated portal to improve the performance indicators.

Further, the Director emphasized strict monitoring, accountability and better coordination to enhance departmental performance across the Jammu division in a time bound manner.

## External Assessment under Kayakalp Programme conducted at SDH Baderwah

HT NEWS NETWORK

**BHADERWAH, FEB 23:** Under the ongoing Kayakalp initiative to promote cleanliness and quality healthcare standards, an External Assessment under the Kayakalp Programme for the financial year 2025-26 was conducted today at Sub District Hospital Baderwah by a designated assessment team.

The assessment was carried out under the directions of the Mission Director, NHM J&K and under the guidance of the Director Health Services Jammu.

The team was headed by Dr. Arun Sharma (External Assessor) and was joined by BMO Kishtwar, Dr. Anil Sharma as Internal Assessor. The assessors undertook a comprehensive evaluation of the departments and functional



areas of the hospital as per Kayakalp guidelines, focusing on sanitation, hygiene, infection prevention and control, biomedical waste management and patient care services.

Upon their arrival, the visiting team was accorded a warm welcome by BMO Baderwah Dr. Versha Sharma along with the staff of the Hospital. She briefed the assessors about the functioning of the institution and the healthcare services being provided

to the local population.

The team inspected key service areas, verified records and interacted with healthcare personnel to assess adherence to prescribed standards under the Kayakalp initiative.

The assessment forms part of the ongoing efforts to promote cleanliness, strengthen infection control practices and ensure continuous quality improvement in public healthcare facilities.

# US' 10pc global duty signals new phase in trade policy: SBI Research

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

**NEW DELHI, FEB 23:** The US Supreme Court's decision to strike down President Donald Trump's emergency tariff measures marks a significant shift in American trade policy, even as the administration has quickly imposed a fresh 10 per cent global import duty under an alternative legal route, according to a detailed analysis by SBI Research.

In its latest report "Leaning Into the Wind: US Supreme Court Scraps US Tariff," released here on Saturday SBI Research said the court's 6-3 verdict invalidated the administration's use of the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (IEEPA) to impose sweeping tariffs.

The court ruled that the Constitution grants Congress — not the President — the authority to levy taxes and duties during peacetime, and that emergency powers under IEEPA could not be stretched to justify broad tariff impositions.

The judgement reinforces the principle that the executive must have clear congressional authorization to impose such measures. The report noted that the ruling draws heavily on constitutional "originalism," underlining that taxation powers lie squarely with Congress.

However, the tariff story does



not end there.

Within hours of the ruling, the administration invoked Section 122 of the Trade Act of 1974 to impose a 10 per cent tariff on all imports for 150 days, effective February 24, 2026. Notably, this is the first time Section 122 has ever been used.

Under the law, the President can impose temporary import surcharges of up to 15 per cent to address balance-of-payments concerns, though the measure expires after 150 days unless Congress approves an extension.

SBI Research highlighted that the move is being positioned as a response to the US widening external imbalance.

The goods trade deficit surged by over 40 per cent in 2024 to USD 1.2 trillion, while the current account

deficit widened to 4 per cent of GDP. The US net international investment position has fallen to a deeply negative USD 26 trillion — nearly 89 per cent of GDP.

While the Supreme Court invalidated tariffs imposed under IEEPA, it did not shut the door on other statutory tools.

The dissenting opinion in the judgement pointed to alternative provisions such as Section 122, Section 201, and Section 301 of the Trade Act of 1974, which provide separate legal avenues for imposing trade restrictions.

SBI Research observed that this legal tug-of-war between the executive and judiciary could reshape global trade dynamics.

The court's ruling may generate uncertainty around existing trade deals that were negotiated under

the earlier tariff framework. Since the legal challenge was filed by private firms rather than sovereign nations, the impact could extend across multiple trade agreements and jurisdictions.

The report also flagged a potentially complex issue: refunds of excess tariffs already collected.

The Supreme Court has referred the matter back to the US Court of International Trade to determine the scope of excess collections. Estimates suggest that USD 160-175 billion may have been collected under the invalidated tariff regime, raising the possibility of large-scale refund claims.

At the same time, sector-specific tariffs under Section 232 of the Trade Expansion Act of 1962 — covering steel, aluminum, automobiles and other products — remain intact, meaning that certain trade barriers will continue.

SBI Research concluded that while the court's decision reduces uncertainty over the use of emergency powers, it opens a new phase of strategic trade negotiations. With Congress now playing a more decisive role and alternative statutory tools in play, the global tariff landscape is likely to remain fluid.

The evolving legal and policy framework, the report noted, will have implications for global supply chains, bilateral trade relations, and investor sentiment in the months ahead. UNI

## Adani finalising Dholera site in Gujarat to assemble aircraft: Embraer President

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

**MUMBAI, FEB 23:** Brazilian aircraft manufacturer, Embraer, today announced that it plans to set up a final assembly line (FAL) to assemble its 88-seater E175 regional jets in India, in a joint venture with the Adani Group by 2028, if the company meets its target of getting order for 200 aircraft from India in two years.

Embraer President and CEO Francisco Gomes Neto said that the Adani Group is in the process of finalising the site of the assembly plant at the Dholera Special Investment Region (DSIR) in Gujarat, citing the union government's 'Ude Desh Ka Aam Naagrik' (UDAN) scheme as one of the factors behind India's rising demand for aircraft to enable domestic regional air connectivity.

Neto further stated that Embraer plans to hold meetings with top brass executives of key Indian airlines like Air India and IndiGo, as well as decision makers of the Tata Group.

Neto's statement comes after Adani Defence & Aerospace had on January 27 announced the signing of an MoU with Embraer to develop an integrated regional transport aircraft ecosystem in India and collaborate on opportunities in aircraft manufacturing, supply chain, aftermarket services, as well as pilot training.

The aircraft will be assembled at the Dholera site, in the Ahmedabad district of Gujarat, by a joint venture between Adani Defence & Aerospace and Embraer.

The Dholera site is likely to be finalised because the Dholera Special Investment Region (DSIR) is expected to be developed as one of India's most advanced smart industrial cities, and a Dholera International

Airport is expected to be built in the city, along with a Maintenance, Repair and Overhaul (MRO) facility for aircraft and a pilot training school. The Dholera Special Investment Region (DSIR) will also include a seaport being set up with private-sector participation by Dholera Port Ltd, which is promoted by the JK Group and the Adani Group.

"Regional aviation is the backbone of economic expansion. With initiatives like UDAN transforming air connectivity across Tier 2 and Tier 3 cities, the need for an indigenous regional aviation ecosystem has become critical.

This partnership will also strengthen strategic relations between India and Brazil, bringing complementary capabilities together," Adani Defence & Aerospace Director Jeet Adani had said on January 27.

"India is a pivotal market for Embraer, and this partnership combines our aerospace expertise with Adani's strong industrial capabilities and commitment to indigenisation. Together, we will evaluate the most viable, advanced, and efficient solutions in support of India's RTA ambitions, and their potential for implementation," Embraer Commercial Aviation President and CEO Arjan Meijer said.

Embraer has a growing footprint and long history in India, with nearly 50 Embraer aircraft and 11 aircraft types currently operating across commercial, defence and business aviation. Embraer aircraft operated by the Indian Air Force (IAF) include the Legacy 600 aircraft and the 'Netra' AEW&C aircraft based on the Embraer ERJ145 platform, while Star Air operates a fleet of 13 E175 and ERJ145 aircraft. UNI

## All new Gravite priced at Rs 5.65 lakh launched at Nissan showroom in Chennai

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

**CHENNAI, FEB 23:** Auto major Nissan India signalled a bold India resurgence with the launch of its all new Gravite at its city showroom at an introductory price of Rs 5.65 lakhs. The much-anticipated Gravite was formally launched by Actresses Ms Farina Azad, Rhema and Subha, P M Senthilnathan - Vice President, HDFC Bank Auto Loan in the presence of Mr. Anand Babu - Regional Sales Manager, Nissan India, Ms Neha Chopra Nahar - CEO Autorelli Nissan, among others.

A release from Nissan said manufactured locally in Chennai reinforcing Nissan's long-term commitment to India. Gravite features cutting-edge design, enhanced safety systems, superior performance, and customer-centric innovations and the bookings were opened from today. With its blend of style, comfort, efficiency and versatility, the new model aims to set new benchmarks in its segment. Gravite, the second critical model in Nissan's rejuvenated portfolio, represents a decisive step in the brand's product renaissance in India. Building on the momentum of the New Nissan Magnite - which is exported from India to markets and locally supported by an expanding dealer network across network cities, Gravite establishes a strong foundation for sustained growth.

With the upcoming Tekton C-SUV in mid-2026 and a 7-seater C-SUV in early 2027, Nissan's future-ready roadmap signals a confident multi-segment offensive in the Indian market.

Gravite is the first product under Nissan Motor India's Product Offensive, marking a decisive step in the brand's resurgence journey in India and was built for modern Indian families, inspired by 1.4 billion Indians and their evolving mobility needs.

It would be available in 5 colors - Forest Green, Onyx Black, Blade Silver, Storm White and Metallic Grey. The company said the dealer network expansion was underway across Tier-I and Tier-II cities to enhance accessibility and customer experience.

Inspired by India. Made in India. Made for India, Gravite is the first product to roll out under Nissan Motor India's renewed product offensive - underlining the company's strengthened commitment and presence in India. The name "Gravite" drew inspiration from 1.4 billion Indians and the 19,000 vernaculars and rituals that shape the nation's diversity. UNI

## Structural reforms needed to mainstream scrap and recycling sector

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

**NEW DELHI, FEB 23:** Structural reforms are essential to bring India's fragmented scrap and recycling markets into the mainstream economy, industry leaders and policymakers said at a national conclave organised by the PHD Chamber of Commerce and Industry in association with MetalX here.

The conclave on 'Reimagining India's Scrap and Recycling Market' brought together government officials, regulators, public sector enterprises, recyclers, financiers, and technology providers to deliberate on improving transparency, governance, and institutional trust across the recycling value chain.

Dr Jatinder Singh, Deputy Secretary General, PHDCCI, said nearly 60-70 per cent of the scrap market operates informally, with contamination levels of 25-30 per

cent and price volatility affecting MSMEs.

He stressed the need for market formalisation, digital transformation, better access to finance, and stronger supply chain transparency. Referring to the union Budget 2026, he said incentives and duty waivers could help position India as a global recycling hub with an estimated USD 17 billion opportunity under Swachh Bharat 2.0.

Vijay Sharma, Chair, Minerals & Metal Committee, PHDCCI, said scrap management is now a strategic business issue linked to competitiveness and sustainability. He noted that one tonne of recycled steel saves 1.1 tonnes of iron ore and 630 kg of coking coal, while reducing emissions by nearly 28 per cent.

He identified key challenges, including fragmentation, lack of standardisation, price volatility, technology and capital gaps, and



a trust deficit. He called for recognising scrap as a strategic commodity and promoting scrap processing clusters, digital infrastructure, and ESG-linked financing.

Alok Sahay, Secretary General of the Indian Steel Association, said India's scrap-based steel production stands at 22 per cent,

compared to 70 per cent in the US and 55 per cent in the EU. With steel output rising from 25 million tonnes to 165 million tonnes and targets of 300 million tonnes by 2030, he said, scrap will be strategically important.

He also highlighted India's dependence on about 8 million tonnes of scrap imports annually

and warned of potential supply risks amid possible export restrictions by OECD countries.

Dr Ajay Mathur, former Director General of the International Solar Alliance, said scrap should be viewed as "urban ore" rather than waste. He pointed out that nearly 90 per cent of recycling takes place in informal and low-recovery conditions.

He called for formalising informal collectors, building digital systems for traceability and pricing transparency, and enabling policy measures such as recycling parks and minimum recycled content mandates.

The event also marked the launch of MetalX, described as India's first institutionally governed neutral digital marketplace for scrap, aimed at enabling transparent price discovery, standardised trade workflows, and wider participation from MSMEs and corporates in the recycling ecosystem. UNI

## SpiceJet barred from Bangladesh airspace over dues as it pushes fleet expansion

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

**NEW DELHI, FEB 23:** The Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh (CAAB) has formally prohibited SpiceJet from operating through its airspace.

The move follows reports that the airline did not settle several months of outstanding air navigation dues, compelling its flights to operate on longer alternative routes and driving up operational expenses.

Industry sources suggest that SpiceJet has failed to make overflight and air navigation payments for over six months. The dues cover services such as air traffic control (ATC),

communication systems, and navigational support, and generally amount to around \$300 per flight for a Boeing 737 aircraft, which forms the core of SpiceJet's fleet.

Sources say SpiceJet has not cleared its overflight and air navigation dues for over six months. The charges, covering air traffic control (ATC), communication systems, and navigational support, generally amount to about \$300 per flight for a Boeing 737, the largest component of SpiceJet's fleet. The restriction has immediate operational consequences for SpiceJet's network, especially affecting its services in Northeast India.

Flights operating from Kolkata to cities like Guwahati, Imphal, and Agartala typically reduce travel time by passing through Bangladeshi airspace.

"We are in continuous discussions with the concerned authorities regarding operational and procedural matters, including navigation-related dues. These are routine industry issues, and we are working constructively to achieve an early resolution. Our flight operations remain unaffected, and we continue to run our scheduled services in accordance with regulatory requirements," the spokesperson said in a statement. UNI

## CCPA issues notices to eCommerce platforms for listing restricted drone, GPS Jammers

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

**NEW DELHI, FEB 23:** The Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA) has issued notices to six e-commerce entities for allegedly listing and selling prohibited wireless signal jammers and anti-drone equipment in violation of existing laws, an official statement said here on Friday.

The action was initiated after the CCPA took suo motu cognisance of online listings offering anti-drone systems, drone jammers and GPS jammers without mandatory statutory approvals and disclosures.

These devices interfere with wireless communication and navigation signals and are strictly regulated under the Indian Telegraph Act, 1885 and the Wireless Telegraphy Act, 1933. As per law, the use, possession, sale, purchase, import or advertisement of such jammers is prohibited, except with specific authorisation from the Central Government. The entities that have been served notices include Everse, IndiaMart, Xboom, Javiat Aerospace, AirONE Robotics and Maveric Drones & Technologies Pvt Ltd.

The CCPA has sought detailed information from these companies, including copies of licences and approvals obtained from competent authorities, procurement and import documents, the number of units sold over the past two years, details of buyers, and the steps taken to remove such listings and prevent recurrence.

The Authority observed that failure to clearly disclose licensing requirements and regulatory restrictions may amount to misleading advertisements and unfair trade practices under the Consumer Protection Act, 2019.

It also noted that e-commerce platforms are required under the Consumer Protection (E-Commerce) Rules, 2020 to exercise due diligence and ensure that goods offered on their platforms comply with applicable laws.

The CCPA has directed the platforms to respond within the stipulated time, failing which further action may be initiated under the provisions of the Consumer Protection Act. UNI

## AI-Physics fusion critical to tackle climate extremes, says MoES Secretary at India AI Impact Summit 2026

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

**NEW DELHI, FEB 23:** M. Ravichandran, Secretary of the Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES), on Friday underscored the need for a paradigm shift in meteorological science, advocating the strategic integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) with traditional physics-based models to address the growing unpredictability of climate extremes. Speaking at a high-

level panel discussion titled "Harnessing AI to Manage Climate Extremes and Build Sustainable Systems" on the final day of the India AI Impact Summit 2026 at Bharat Mandapam, Ravichandran said that while conventional numerical weather models remain strong in broad spatial forecasting, AI is critical for mastering time-series analysis and capturing hyper-local weather variability.

Using a vivid metaphor to

illustrate the evolving complexity of climate science, he remarked: "Earlier, we just had to track the 'elephant', the large-scale weather systems. But today, because of climate change, we need to track the 'ant' sitting on that elephant. We must understand both the large spatial movements and the hyper-local time series."

He explained that physics-based numerical models are effective for large-scale spatial mapping but often rely on

assumptions that introduce forecasting errors. AI, he noted, can help minimise these errors, refine initial conditions, and significantly enhance predictive accuracy, particularly for high-impact events such as cloudbursts, which remain notoriously difficult to forecast.

Ravichandran also proposed that the India Meteorological Department (IMD) should open up its extensive 150-year data archive to young researchers and multidisciplinary experts to

accelerate innovation in climate analytics.

Concluding his address, he urged the scientific community to break free from departmental silos. "We shouldn't think in isolation. We need biologists, data scientists, and experts from multiple disciplines to examine our datasets from diverse perspectives. A collaborative, data-driven approach is the only way forward to build a climate-resilient India," he said. UNI

# Matthew Forde is out to 'create his own history'

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

**MUMBAI:** There's about a 0.27% chance of one person sharing a birthday with another, and Matthew Forde shares his with Andre Russell (April 29). It's no surprise that the Russell comparisons have followed him for a few years. The noise has only gotten louder after Forde hit the joint-fastest ODI fifty, off 16 balls, in Belfast last year, to go level with AB de Villiers. Those are "big shoes to fill," Forde said around then. But when fit - he was nursing shoulder issues last year - Forde has played as an allrounder in the lower-middle order while being a useful swing bowler in the powerplay for West Indies. He also replaced Russell in the West Indies squad during the Australia series at home after Russell signed off in Jamaica last year. Now at his maiden T20 World Cup, Forde has stepped up to produce a miserly economy rate of 4.40 in three games and averages 11 with the ball. Although he did not play in the win against England, Forde is the most economical bowler for anyone who has bowled more than five overs this World Cup. His best game was arguably against Italy. That might have been a dead-rubber for the Super Eight, but West Indies were struggling

in the final overs in the first innings. His innovative shots behind the wicket to score an unbeaten eight-ball 16 were the reason they finished on 165, a par score at Eden Gardens. Italy were the happier side at the break, but Forde dented their hopes of an upset early with his two powerplay wickets and overall figures of 3 for 19. That spell was a follow-up from his 1 for 10 in four overs against Nepal. He credits it to a "mindset shift" 18 months ago when fitness took centre-stage. Forde signs off on his Instagram pictures with a hashtag reading "Mustang", a pun that goes well with his surname but also reflects a strong but free-spirited personality. The captions on those social media posts are quotes of motivation, the kind that look good on a boardroom wall. "That's a funny one," Forde said from the sidelines of the T20 World Cup. "My mom always told me I had a high self-esteem. So one thing with me is to always be confident. I always believe I can do anything." At this World Cup, the quote he is most inspired by is "create your own history", echoed by head coach Daren Sammy to the team, he revealed. Conversations around West Indies this campaign seem to date back to 2016 (or even fur-

ther back, to the dominance of the Marshalls and Garners during some media interactions), and Forde said Sammy wants the team to play in such a way that 2016 is forgotten for once and the class of 2026 writes their own legacy. "It's for us to put West Indies back up there on the map again and create our own history," Forde said after the team finished Group C unbeaten. "As a collective group, we're coming together at the right time. Our camaraderie is there and everyone has one goal. We've been training very hard, the boys are quite hungry. With the Super Eights coming up, we'll have to play even better cricket." Forde's best bowling performances also came against top teams, a quality that's irreplaceable in a stage like the Super Eight. He has two three-fors from a 2024 T20I series against South Africa, the team West Indies will meet on February 26 in Ahmedabad. His batting contributions in international cricket have largely been useful cameos, but earlier this month, he impressed by hitting a 26-ball unbeaten 52 in the World Cup warm-ups when five of the top seven batters were out for single-digit scores against an Afghanistan attack that looked rampaging up until then.



## Morkels reignite battle of the backyard

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

**PERTH:** What's been billed as the biggest match of the 2026 T20 World Cup so far is also a contest between two members of the same family as Morne Morkel and Albie Morkel come up against each other from the dug-out. Once team-mates, briefly at the international level and for a longer period domestically, they are now on opposite sides as India's bowling coach and South Africa's T20 specialist consultant, respectively and the battle from the backyard could be reignited. There, there was usually only one winner. "With Morne being the youngest, Albie and myself always batted first in any backyard game," Malan Morkel, the oldest of the three brothers, who had a brief under-19 career and now works as a coach at one of South Africa's most prestigious schools, Paarl Gimnasium, told ESPNcricinfo. "So Morne had to bowl thousands of balls at us and when it was his time to bat, we would often say, 'let's go for a swim' depriving him of time in the middle." The result was that Morne had plenty of practice against left-handed batters, as both Malan and Albie are left-handers, but "never really developed batsmanship because we seldom let him bat." No wonder when the opportunity came up to open the batting for South Africa in a Test match in 2009 (when Graeme Smith had his hand broken by Mitchell Johnson), Morne grabbed it with both gloves and earned the nickname Haydos as a result. Earlier that year, Albie played what turned out to be his only Test for South Africa, also against Australia, but there was no resentment on his part that Morne had surged ahead of him. "They were always supportive of each other and enjoyed each other's success," Malan said. Albie went on to become a "T20 specialist," as Malan puts it and developed a cult following at CSK, for whom he played 92 matches between 2008 and 2013. He is a lifer at the franchise and now works in its coaching set-ups around the world, including at JSK in South Africa. Morne went on to have a stellar international career and is one of only six South African bowlers to get more than 300 wickets in Tests and was part of the team that lifted the Test mace in 2012. The two have been team-mates against India on three occasions at the T20 World Cup - 2007, 2009 and 2010. Between them, they lived their late father Albert's dream. "Their love for cricket stems from the exposure we got through our dad being a semi-professional cricket player, school teacher and cricket coach. He played competitive cricket until the age of 45," Malan said. "We spent countless hours next to the field where he was either playing himself or coaching a team. It was part of our DNA." As similar as their interests were as children, their personalities are vastly different. "Albie was quiet, reserved and a deep thinker but ultra competitive," Malan said. "Morne was the funny one. We have many home videos where he is always pulling funny faces or performing a crazy dance."

# 'Last year he covered for us, now we cover for him' - Suryakumar on Abhishek's form

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

**AHMEDABAD:** India captain Suryakumar Yadav isn't fretting over anything - not even Abhishek Sharma's three ducks - as they begin their Super Eight stage against South Africa in Ahmedabad on Sunday. "I worry for the people worried about Abhishek's form," Suryakumar chuckled at the press conference. "Why are they so worried about Abhishek's form? I think about those teams who are going to play against him. That he has not yet scored a run. When he scores, you have seen what happens. "It happens [ducks]; it's a team

sport, it keeps going on. Now the team has a requirement that the ladka (guy) should play with his identity. So he is trying to play. If it happens, it's fine, if it doesn't, we are there to cover. And Abhishek's lack of runs won't force them to look elsewhere. Even if India run the risk of being predictable with the left-handedness in their squad - six in the top eight - which has given opposition offspinners an opportunity to make plans. "Should I play Sanju for Abhishek," Suryakumar responded when asked if India could bring in Sanju Samson. When told



Samson could bat No. 3, Suryakumar widened his eyes theatrically. "You mean I should make him play for Tilak? It's going well in the powerplay. We're still making 40-50 runs," he said. "That's normal cricket. We have expectations from ourselves to score 220, 240, 250. But the wickets are a little different here. "The four wickets we have played on so far were a little different and challenging. Offspinners were not bowling earlier but they are now. So we have started preparation for that and hopefully we will tackle it as we start our Super

Eight journey." With the fun and banter setting, Suryakumar went on to explain Tilak's role in earnest. He has been striking at 120.45 in the tournament so far, with all his innings at No. 3. "I have told him, the team management has told him that he has to bat that way," he said. "If one wicket is down, then he can go and have his own game in the powerplay. But as soon as two wickets are down, then he has to take a little bit of backseat, get a partnership again, get to the 10th over and then we have enough firepower to continue and take on the bowling."

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