

Srinagar

Friday

March 06 | 2026

16 Ramadan 1447 AH

Issue No: 57

Volume: 16

Pages: 12

Price: Rs 02/-

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YEAR OF  
PUBLICATION

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## War Alone Cannot Solve Global Conflicts : PM Modi

Bats for dialogue, diplomacy and rule of law amid Ukraine and West Asia crises

■ HT NEWS DESK / AGENCIES

**NEW DELHI, MAR 05:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday asserted that military conflict alone cannot resolve global disputes, stressing that dialogue, diplomacy and adherence to the rule of law are essential to address ongoing crises, including the wars in Ukraine and West Asia.

Addressing a joint press briefing with



Finnish President Alexander Stubb in New Delhi, Modi said India and Finland share a common belief that peaceful engagement remains the only sustainable path to resolving international conflicts.

"India and Finland both believe in the rule of law, dialogue and diplomacy. We agree that no issue can be resolved through military conflict alone. Whether it is Ukraine or West Asia, we will continue

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## First fully digital census to begin with houselisting phase in April 2026: Amit Shah

■ HT NEWS DESK / AGENCIES

**NEW DELHI, MAR 5:** Amit Shah on Thursday unveiled the official mascots and soft-launched four digital platforms that will power India's first fully digital national census, marking a major technological shift in the country's decadal population exercise.

The Union Home Minister introduced the digital tools ahead of Census 2027, the 16th population count of the country, which will include caste enumeration and provide citizens the option of self-enumeration for the first time.

The four digital platforms launched include the Houselisting Block Creator (HLBC) web application, the HLO mobile application for field enumerators, a Self-Enumeration (SE)



portal for citizens, and the Census Management and Monitoring System (CMMS), a centralised platform designed to plan and monitor the massive exercise.

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## Young Medicos Honoured with National Healthcare Awards

■ HT NEWS DESK / AGENCIES

**NEW DELHI, MAR 5:** Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Science and Technology and several other portfolios, Jitendra Singh on Thursday presented National Healthcare Awards to 26 young medical professionals from across the country who have excelled in different specialties, including Oncology, Paediatrics, Endocrinology, Orthopaedics and Emergency Medicine.

Addressing the conclave, Singh said recognising doctors at an early stage of their careers is vital for strengthening the future of healthcare services in the country. He noted

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## Agriculture Sector Holds Key to Startup Growth in J&K: Omar Abdullah

CM urges youth to become job creators, stresses value addition and innovation in farming

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

**JAMMU, MAR 5:** Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Thursday said that agriculture and allied sectors offer immense potential for start-ups, value addition and entrepreneurship in Jammu and Kashmir, urging young people to shift their focus from seeking government jobs to creating employment opportunities.

Addressing a Startup Outreach

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## CM chairs preliminary meeting of Mission SKILL framework for J&K

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

**JAMMU, MAR 05:** Chief Minister Omar Abdullah today chaired a preliminary meeting to discuss the formulation of an action plan for Mission SKILL in Jammu and

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## 660 Kashmir Private Schools Get Final Notice Over Fee Regulation Violations

FFRC warns of fee collection ban and penalties if documents are not submitted within 15 days

■ HT NEWS DESK / AGENCIES

**SRINAGAR, MAR 5:** The Fee Fixation and Regulation Committee (FFRC) has issued a final notice to 660 private schools across the Kashmir division for failing to submit mandatory documents related to the approval and regulation of their fee structures.

The committee, headed by Justice Sunil Hali (Retd.), said several institutions have repeatedly failed to furnish the required files despite



earlier communications, raising serious concerns about compliance with statutory provisions governing private school fee regulation.

In the notice, the FFRC stated that

under Section 20-C(3) of the Jammu and Kashmir School Education Act, 2002, the committee has the authority to restrain any private school from collecting fees from students until its fee structure receives formal approval.

It further noted that Rule 8(2) of the Jammu and Kashmir Private Schools Rules, 2022 clearly mandates that no private school can revise or collect any fee without prior approval from the committee.

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## J&K Govt Orders Administrative Reshuffle, Several Officials Transferred

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

**JAMMU, MAR 5:** The Jammu and Kashmir Government on Thursday ordered the transfer and posting of several officials across departments in an administrative reshuffle aimed at streamlining government functioning.

According to Government Order No. 284-JK(GAD) of 2026 dated March 5, issued by the General Administration Department (GAD), the transfers and postings have been made with immediate effect.

As per the order, Anuradha Abrol, Private

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## J&K Govt initiates steps for establishment of AI Mission

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

**JAMMU, MAR 5:** The government has initiated steps for establishing the Jammu & Kashmir Artificial Intelligence Mission (JK-AIM) to promote adoption of Artificial Intelligence and emerging technologies in governance across the Union Territory.

A meeting in this regard was held under the chairmanship of Dr. Piyush Singla, Administrative Secretary, Information Technology Department, to deliberate on creating a structured institutional framework for enabling AI-based solutions in government functioning and public service delivery.

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## Resolution For His Removal: Speaker Birla To Be Present In House But Not Chair Proceedings

■ HT NEWS NETWORK / AGENCIES

**NEW DELHI, MAR 5:** The Lok Sabha will witness a rare moment most likely on Monday next when Om Birla will not chair proceedings but will be seated amongst the members as the House takes up a notice seeking his removal from office.

As Parliament meets for the second phase of the Budget session on March 9, the Lok Sabha is



likely to take up the resolution moved by the opposition against Birla's for allegedly acting in a "blatantly partisan" manner.

According to the rules and laid down procedure, Birla will get a right to defend himself when the resolution is discussed by the lower house. He will also have the right to vote against the resolution, Constitution expert P D T Achary explained.

The expert said while Birla will not chair the proceedings when the resolution comes up before the House, he will be seated in the prominent rows in the

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## NASHA MUKT JAMMU KASHMIR ABHIYAAN

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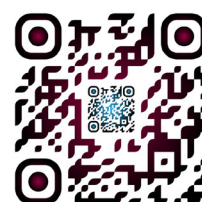
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# Div Com Reviews Projects for Traffic Management and Road safety in Srinagar

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

**SRINAGAR, MAR05:** The Divisional Commissioner Kashmir, Anshul Garg, on Thursday chaired a meeting to review finalization of Detailed Project Reports (DPRs) for parking sites, roads and bridges, besides identifying black spots to ensure smooth traffic movement and decongestion of Srinagar.

The meeting was attended by the Deputy Commissioner Srinagar, CEO of Srinagar Smart City Limited (SSCL), SSP Traffic Srinagar, RTO Kashmir, and officers from the Roads & Buildings (R&B) Department, Srinagar Development Authority (SDA) and National Highways Authority of India (NHAI).

Addressing the officers, the Divisional Commissioner directed all departments to submit reports on developmental projects related to roads, bridges and parking areas, including details of approved works, proposals under submission and new project proposals.



He also instructed the departments to submit a report on traffic black spots and bottlenecks along with proposed interventions by Monday. The CEO of Srinagar Smart

City Limited was directed to rationalize e-bus routes, ensure adherence to time schedules and designate proper bus stops.

The R&B Department and Border Roads Organisation (BEACON) were asked to submit a report regarding the closure of crossings along the National Highway from Parimpora to Narbal.

The Divisional Commissioner also urged SSP Traffic to ensure optimum utilization of ITMS cameras for effective enforcement of traffic regulations and generation of challans.

Further, the CEO SSCL was directed to ensure painting of stop lines and marking of zebra crossings on roads.

The Divisional Commissioner instructed that work on the IT-based car parking be completed by March 31.

The R&B Department was also directed to submit a report identifying bridges requiring intervention to facilitate inland waterway transport on the Jhelum River.

## Poor BSNL Network Troubles Subscribers Across Kulgam Despite Presence of Towers

■ FAROOQ RATHER

**KULGAM, MAR05:** Residents of several areas of Kulgam district have expressed serious concern over the poor mobile network services of Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL), stating that despite the presence of multiple telecom towers in the district, the network often remains weak or non-functional. According to local subscribers, the poor connectivity has been causing immense inconvenience to BSNL users who rely on the network for communication and internet services. People from various areas including Kund, Devsar, Homshalibugh, Noorabad and several other parts of the district have been continuously complaining about weak signals and frequent network disruptions.

Residents said that due to poor signal strength, they are unable to make phone calls or access mobile internet properly, which is severely affecting their daily communication and online activities. In many areas, the network remains unavailable for long periods, causing serious difficulties for the public. Locals further stated that the problem has been persisting for several years and has repeatedly been brought to the notice of the concerned authorities of Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited. However, despite numerous complaints and appeals from residents, no effective steps have been taken so far to resolve the issue.

The subscribers said that in the present digital era, reliable mobile and internet connectivity has become a basic necessity, but the continued network issues have left BSNL users frustrated across the district.

Residents have urged the concerned authorities to immediately look into the matter, inspect the telecom infrastructure, and take necessary measures to improve network connectivity so that the people of Kulgam district do not continue to face such difficulties.

## Injured Musk Deer Rescued From LoC Fence in Gurez

■ HT NEWS NETWORK / AGENCIES

**BANDIPORA, MAR 5:** An injured female musk deer was rescued by Wildlife Department officials after it was found entangled in a barbed wire fence along the Line of Control (LoC) in the Gurez sector of north Kashmir's Bandipora district on Thursday.

Wildlife officials said the animal was first spotted by local residents in the Shitalbagh area near a BRO camp in Gurez Valley, who noticed that the deer had become trapped in the fencing and appeared injured.

Residents immediately informed the Wildlife Department, following which a rescue team rushed to the spot and carefully freed the animal from the barbed wire.

Officials said the endangered deer had sustained minor injuries while trying to free itself from the fence along the LoC.

After the rescue, the animal was safely shifted to a veterinary facility in Dawar, where it received medical treatment from veterinary staff.

Following treatment, the musk deer was released back into its natural habitat in the nearby forest area, officials said.

Wildlife officials appreciated the timely action of the local residents, saying their prompt response helped save the life of the rare animal. The Himalayan musk deer, considered an endangered species, inhabits the high-altitude forests of the Himalayas, including parts of Kashmir, Gurez, Kishtwar and Himachal Pradesh.

Conservationists say such rescue operations highlight the importance of community awareness and wildlife protection in fragile mountain ecosystems.

## SKUAST-K Distributes Agri Inputs, Trains Tribal Farmers on Biological Pest Control

50 Tribal Farmers in Ganderbal Benefit from SKUAST-K Sustainable Agriculture Initiative

■ DR.AB QAYOOM

**GANDERBAL, MAR 05:** Sher-e-Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology of Kashmir (SKUAST-K) organized a material distribution cum scientist farmer interaction programme at Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK) Ganderbal to promote eco-friendly pest management practices among tribal farmers of the district. The programme was conducted under the All India Coordinated Research Project on Biological Control of Crop Pests (AICRP-BC), Division of Entomology, Faculty of Horticulture, SKUAST-K, Shalimar in collaboration with KVK Ganderbal. The initiative was sponsored by the Indian Council of Agricultural Research-National Bureau of Agricultural Insect Resources (ICAR-NBAIR), Bengaluru. Prof. (Dr.) Rahaina Habib Kanth, Director Extension, SKUAST-K, graced the occasion as the Chief Guest. In her address, she highlighted the increasing need for eco-friendly and sustainable pest

management strategies in modern agriculture. She stressed that the adoption of biological control measures can significantly reduce the excessive use of chemical pesticides, thereby safeguarding the environment and improving food safety. During the programme, Dr. Sajad Mohi-ud-Din, Principal Investigator, and Dr. Mudasir Gani, Co-Principal Investigator, delivered detailed presentations on integrated insect pest management in maize, apple, and other important crops of the region. They educated farmers about the role of biocontrol agents, pheromone-based monitoring techniques, and the use of botanicals for sustainable crop protection. Prof. Akhtar Ali Khan, Head, Division of Entomology, Faculty of Horticulture, SKUAST-K, also addressed the gathering and emphasized the importance of biological control agents in managing insect pests. He underlined that adopting eco-friendly pest management technologies would ensure long-term benefits for



both farmers and the agricultural ecosystem. As part of the ICAR-NBAIR sponsored Tribal Sub-Plan (TSP) initiative, essential

agricultural inputs including quality maize seed, vermicompost, pheromone traps, and neem oil were distributed among 50 tribal farmers of the area. The initiative aims to strengthen sustainable farming practices and enhance the productivity of tribal farmers. Dr. Ajaz Ahmad Malik, Senior Scientist and Head, KVK Ganderbal, explained the effective use of the distributed materials and encouraged farmers to adopt scientific pest management approaches to increase crop yield while minimizing pesticide residues. The participating farmers expressed their gratitude to SKUAST-K for organizing such programmes and appreciated the university's efforts in empowering tribal communities through scientific knowledge and environmentally safe agricultural practices. The programme concluded with an interactive session where farmers shared their experiences and sought expert guidance on pest management challenges faced in the field.

## Secretary RDD reviews implementation of O&M, FSSM policies under SBM-G

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

**SRINAGAR, MAR05:** Secretary, Rural Development Department (RDD) and Panchayati Raj, Mohammad Aijaz Asad, on Thursday chaired a review meeting to finalise the implementation framework for Operation & Maintenance (O&M) of sanitation assets and Faecal Sludge & Septage Management (FSSM) under Swachh Bharat Mission-Grameen (SBM-G).

The meeting was attended by Director General Rural Sanitation Anoo Malhotra, Director Finance Umar Khan, Joint Director Planning Kamal Kumar, Superintending Engineers REW Jammu/Kashmir and other officials.

The Secretary reviewed the status of sanitation infrastructure created under SBM-G and stressed the need for a structured mechanism for maintenance of assets such as community sanitary complexes, solid and liquid waste management facilities and faecal sludge treatment systems.

It was informed that over 20 lakh

sanitation assets, including individual household toilets, Community Sanitary complexes, compost pits, Soak pits, segregation sheds and other sanitation facilities have been created across rural Jammu and Kashmir under SBM-G. The O&M policy aims to ensure their long-term sustainability and upkeep.

Emphasising decentralised implementation, the Secretary directed that operational powers related to sanitation management be streamlined through the Directorate while execution of activities be ensured at the district level under Deputy Commissioners. He also called for strengthening digital monitoring systems, including development of an online SBM dashboard for asset tracking, user-charge monitoring and grievance redressal.

Highlighting financial sustainability, he noted that 10 percent of PRI Capex allocation has been earmarked for operation and maintenance of sanitation assets and stressed the need to mobilise addi-



tional resources through user charges and community participation.

The Secretary further directed that regulatory provisions relating to waste management be aligned with the Jammu and Kashmir Pan-

chayati Raj Act, 1989, with a clearly defined penalty and appeal mechanism. It was decided that BDOs will enforce sanitation regulations at the block level, with appeals against penalties lying before the Assistant Commissioner Development (ACD).

He also stressed strengthening door-to-door waste collection systems, rationalising user charges and developing a dedicated IEC strategy for the O&M policy.

Highlighting the importance of scientific treatment of faecal sludge, the Secretary emphasised effective functioning and expansion of Faecal Sludge Treatment Plants (FSTPs). He also called for systematic surveys and mapping of toilets and containment systems to assess desludging demand and ensure proper linkage of villages with treatment facilities.

The Secretary further directed officials to develop clear Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for desludging, transportation and treatment under the FSSM framework.

## Entrepreneurship Mela organised at Baderwah under Mission YUVA

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

**BHADERWAH, MAR 05:** To promote entrepreneurship and generate awareness among youth regarding self-employment opportunities, a one-day Entrepreneurship Mela under Mission YUVA was organised today at Community Hall Baderwah.

The government departments put up stalls showcasing start-up potential in agriculture, horticulture, handicrafts, handloom, cooperative and other sectors. Successful entrepreneurs and Self Help Group members also displayed their products and shared their experiences to motivate aspiring youth.

A large number of students, Self Help Group members and prospective entrepreneurs participated in the event and interacted with departmental officers and bank representatives to seek guidance regarding establishment of enterprises under different government initiatives.

The programme was attended by Additional District Development Commissioner (ADDC) Roshan Lal, Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC) Sunil Kumar Bhutyal and Assistant Director Employment Nehal Pandit, besides officers from the line departments, representatives from financial

institutions, Self Help Groups, students and aspiring entrepreneurs from different parts of the district.

Speaking on the occasion, the ADC highlighted the importance of Mission YUVA in creating an enabling ecosystem for entrepreneurship and livelihood generation among the youth. He called upon government departments, financial institutions and other stakeholders to put in coordinated efforts to facilitate aspiring entrepreneurs in establishing sustainable enterprises.

The ADC encouraged the youth to take advantage of the government schemes aimed at promoting self-employment and skill development. He emphasized that entrepreneurship has the potential to generate employment and contribute significantly to the local economy.

Earlier, the Assistant Director Employment informed that the mela was organised with the objective of providing a common platform to the stakeholder departments, financial institutions and aspiring entrepreneurs so that youth could obtain information regarding different government schemes, training opportunities and financial assistance available for starting their own ventures.

# Javed Rana reviews functioning of Tribal Hostels in Jammu Division

Stresses improved facilities, quality nutrition, expedited construction

## HT NEWS NETWORK

**JAMMU, MARCH 05:** Minister for Tribal Affairs, Javed Ahmed Rana, today chaired a comprehensive review meeting to assess the functioning of tribal hostels across the Jammu division, with a focus on improving living facilities, strengthening nutritional standards, ensuring quality education and expediting the construction of new hostel infrastructure for tribal students.

During the meeting, the Minister reviewed the overall functioning of hostels operating under the Tribal Affairs Department and took stock of the progress of hostel buildings currently under construction in various districts of the Jammu division. He directed the concerned officers to immediately identify and remove all bottlenecks hampering the pace of construction so that the works are completed within the stipulated timelines.

Emphasising the importance of adequate accommodation facilities for students belonging to tribal communities, the Minister stated that the construction and upgradation of tribal hostels must be treated as a priority by the department. He observed that these hostels play a crucial role in enabling students from remote and tribal areas to pursue education in

urban and semi-urban centres. He also instructed the concerned authorities to resolve issues related to land identification and allotment on priority so that no delay occurs in the execution of approved projects.

The Minister stressed that hostel facilities should not only provide accommodation but also create a supportive and enabling environment for students to focus on their studies and overall development. He underscored the need to strengthen academic support mechanisms within hostels and ensure that students receive a conducive atmosphere for quality education and personal growth.

Taking serious notice of complaints received from certain areas regarding the quality and availability of food and dietary supplements provided to students, the Minister directed the department to ensure strict monitoring of food supplies. He instructed that hostel menus should be of optimum quality and must be designed to meet the nutritional requirements of students. He also called for the introduction of a standardised and balanced menu across tribal hostels in Jammu and Kashmir to ensure uniformity in dietary standards and proper nutrition for all students.

The Minister further directed the wardens of hostels to submit



detailed requirements of their respective institutions, including repair and renovation works,

furnishing needs, maintenance requirements and other infrastructural gaps. He said that the preparation of such requirement reports will enable the department to plan timely interventions and allocate resources for improving hostel facilities in a systematic manner.

Highlighting the importance of holistic development, the Minister emphasised that hostels should actively promote sports, cultural and extracurricular activities among students. He observed that such activities play an important role in nurturing talent, building confidence and ensuring the overall personality development of students from tribal communities.

During the meeting, the Minister also reviewed the staffing position in hostels, including the availability of wardens and supporting staff, and sought details regarding vacancies and the requirement of additional manpower wherever necessary.

He emphasised the need to strengthen safety and welfare measures in hostels by ensuring adequate security arrangements, regular health check-ups and access to basic medical facilities for students.

The Minister further directed the department to maintain proper financial discipline and ensure judicious utilisation of

funds allocated for hostel management and infrastructure development. He asked the officers to maintain updated records regarding the status of funds received, expenditure incurred and any pending liabilities so that financial management remains transparent and accountable.

Reiterating the government's commitment to the welfare and educational advancement of tribal students, the Minister said that strengthening hostel infrastructure and improving student welfare measures remain key priorities of the Tribal Affairs Department.

The Minister also directed that the names of hostels must remain the same as approved at the time of their sanction and should not be altered under any circumstances, as maintaining the sanctioned nomenclature is important for administrative clarity and record consistency.

Director Tribal Affairs J&K Mohammad Mumtaz Ali, Director Finance Tribal Affairs Department Iftikhar Chouhan, Additional Secretary Latief Choudhary, Joint Director Planning Abdul Khaliq Bhatti and Deputy Director Tribal Affairs Jammu (Nodal Officer TRI) Dr. Abdul Khabir, along with other officers and officials of the department, participated in the meeting.

## DC Budgam reviews progress under PM Surya Ghar-Muft Bijli Yojana

Calls for enhanced public awareness and accelerated rooftop solar adoption in district

## HT NEWS NETWORK

**BUDGAM, MARCH 05:** Deputy Commissioner (DC) Budgam, Athar Aamir Khan, today chaired a meeting to review the progress achieved under PM Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana in the district.

During the meeting, the DC took a comprehensive review of the installation of rooftop solar systems across all electrical sub-



divisions of Budgam.

He highlighted the numerous benefits of the initiative and urged the KPDCCL officials to intensify their public awareness efforts regarding the advantages of installing rooftop solar plants.

Stressing the importance of mass outreach, the DC directed officials to launch an extensive awareness campaign to educate the public about the scheme's

financial and environmental benefits. He also emphasized the need for speedy implementation to ensure that residents fully utilize the scheme's benefits.

The meeting was attended by JD planning Budgam, Javaid Ahmad Najar, Superintending Engineer, KPDCCL Budgam; ACD Budgam, Executive Engineer KPDCCL, LDM Budgam, AEEs, and other concerned officials.

## Food Safety drive conducted in Shopian, action initiated against violators

## HT NEWS NETWORK

**SHOPIAN, FEBRUARY 05:** To safeguard public health and ensure strict adherence to food safety regulations, an inspection team of Food Safety, Shopian, headed by Food Safety Officer, Shopian, Firdous Ahmed Pandit, carried out extensive inspections of various food establishments including, bakeries, meat shops and Kiriyana stores at Nadigam, Kutpora and Kundalan areas of the district.

During the drive, the inspection team thoroughly examined the quality of food items, hygiene and sanitation practices being followed at the establishments, storage conditions of food products and overall compliance with the provisions of the Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006.

The team laid special emphasis on maintaining proper hygiene, safe storage of food materials and ensuring that food items meant for public consumption meet the prescribed safety standards.

During the course of inspection, expired food items were immediately seized and destroyed on the spot to eliminate any potential risk to public health. The team also sensitized the shopkeepers and food business operators about maintaining quality standards and adhering strictly to food safety guidelines.

Furthermore, two Food Business Operators (FBOs) were found violating the relevant provisions of the Act and have been recommended for legal action under Section 69 of the Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006.

Meanwhile, the inspection team also visited the ICDS Centre at Nadigam to verify the hygiene conditions and proper handling of food provided to the beneficiaries. The team inspected the kitchen area, storage of ration and overall sanitation facilities at the centre.

Necessary instructions were issued to the concerned staff to maintain cleanliness, ensure proper storage of food items and strictly follow the prescribed food safety and hygiene norms to safeguard the health of beneficiaries.

## Market checking intensified across Baramulla during Ramzan; ₹82,500 Fine imposed

## HT NEWS NETWORK

**BARAMULLA, MARCH 05:** Market checking teams headed by Tehsildars, along with officials from Municipalities (EOs), Legal Metrology, Food Safety Department, Food & Civil Supplies Department and Police, are conducting regular inspections in all markets across District Baramulla during the holy month of Ramzan to ensure price control and prevent overcharging.

During the inspections, various establishments were checked for adherence to government-approved rates, hygiene standards and proper weighing practices. Strict action is being taken against violators found indulging in overpricing and other irregularities.



A total fine of ₹82,500 has been imposed on erring traders across the district.

Traders have been urged to strictly follow the prescribed rates and maintain quality standards during Ramzan. The public has also been encouraged to report any instances of overpricing or malpractice to the concerned authorities.

## DC Budgam reviews progress of 4G Saturation Project in District

## HT NEWS NETWORK

**BUDGAM, MARCH 05:** Deputy Commissioner (DC) Budgam, Athar Aamir Khan, today chaired a review meeting regarding the implementation and progress of the 4G Saturation Project in the district.

During the meeting, the DC took a comprehensive review of the status of land transfer and identification of sites for installation of 4G towers aimed at enhancing digital connectivity across Budgam. It was informed that land has been transferred at 23 locations in the district for the installation of 4G towers under the project. The DC stressed on expediting the necessary procedures so that installation and operationalization of these towers is carried out in a time-bound manner.

The meeting also discussed the identification of additional sites in shadow areas under both General Purpose and Special Purpose categories to ensure seamless mobile connectivity for the general public as well as



uncovered tourist destinations across the district.

The DC emphasized the importance of strengthening digital infrastructure, stating that improved connectivity will not only benefit residents but also enhance access to online services, education, healthcare and tourism-related activities. He directed the concerned officers to identify all remaining connectivity gaps and ensure

prompt coordination with telecom service providers so that the benefits of the 4G Saturation Project reach every remote and underserved area of the district.

The meeting was attended by ADC Budgam, JD planning, ACR Budgam, DIO Informatics and officers from the concerned departments and representatives of telecom service providers.

## DC Pulwama reviews arrangements for JKSSB Wildlife Guard Examination

Directs strict adherence to SOPs, inter-departmental coordination for smooth conduct of examination

## HT NEWS NETWORK

**PULWAMA, MARCH 05:** Deputy Commissioner (DC) Pulwama, Dr. Basharat Qayoom today chaired a comprehensive meeting at Circuit House Pulwama to review the arrangements put in place for the smooth and successful conduct of the JKSSB Wildlife Guard Examination scheduled to be held on March 08, 2026. At the outset, Additional Deputy Commissioner Pulwama (Chief Inspector, JKSSB Examinations) briefed the chair about the preparedness and arrangements finalized for the examination. It was informed that

the deployment of Centre Superintendents, Deputy Superintendents, Invigilators and Videographers has been completed.

The meeting was further apprised about the deployment of Magistrates and Observers, besides the arrangements related to transportation, security, surveillance mechanisms and other logistical support to ensure fair and transparent conduct of the examination. The DC reviewed the arrangements and interacted with the concerned officers, particularly Centre Superintendents, directing them to strictly adhere to the prescribed Standard Operating



Procedures (SOPs). He stressed upon maintaining transparency, confidentiality and discipline

during the conduct of the examination. Emphasizing the importance of inter-departmental

coordination, the DC called for a collaborative effort among all concerned departments to create a conducive environment for the appearing candidates.

Earlier in the day, a comprehensive training programme was organized at Government Degree College for Boys, Pulwama for Centre Superintendents, Deputy Superintendents, Invigilators and Clerical Staff.

The training focused on strict adherence to SOPs, frisking procedures, handling of examination material and ensuring smooth and transparent conduct of the examination.

## Mission Director reviews physical, financial progress of HADP

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

**JAMMU, MARCH 05:** Mission Director HADP/JKCIP Sandeep Kumar today chaired a review meeting in the Conference Hall, Directorate of Agriculture, Talab Tillo to assess the physical and financial progress and expenditure status under different projects of the Holistic Agriculture Development Programme (HADP).

The meeting was attended by Director Agriculture Jammu, Director Horticulture Jammu, Director Animal Husbandry Jammu, besides technical officers and representatives from SKUAST-Jammu. HoDs, technical officers and representatives from SKUAST-Kashmir also participated in the meeting through video conferencing.

The Mission Director emphasized the need for close coordination among the stakeholder departments and executing agencies to ensure effective implementation and timely completion of the projects under



HADP. He stressed that strong inter-departmental collaboration is essential for achieving the intended outcomes of the programme.

Highlighting the growing popularity of millet-based food, he asked for promoting Millet Restaurants to enhance awareness and consumption of millets. He also directed the concerned officers to achieve the targets of Millet

Mills in a time-bound manner, ensuring that these mills are established in areas where millet cultivation is already taking place or where area expansion has been undertaken.

Reviewing the beekeeping component, Sandeep Kumar took note of the issues related to unit tracking. He directed the officials to resolve the bottlenecks at the earliest to ensure smooth

monitoring and implementation. The Mission Director also emphasized the importance of strengthening Seed Village and Village Seed Bank activities to enhance the availability of quality seeds at the grassroots level.

The MD conducted district-wise and project-wise review of financial expenditure and physical progress. He reviewed the expenditure status of SKUAST-Jammu and SKUAST-

Kashmir under the HADP, while directing for completion of works within the stipulated framework. He further emphasized the need to strengthen research, extension support and field-level interventions for the successful implementation of HADP initiatives across the Union Territory. He also reviewed the status of public sector activities and directed the concerned departments to ensure their timely progress.

While reviewing the Animal Husbandry sector, Sandeep Kumar stressed the need for close coordination with allied sectors, particularly under the Rainfed Area Development (RAD) component. He directed the concerned officials to ensure timely execution and effective implementation of the activities.

The meeting concluded with detailed deliberations on improving coordination, monitoring mechanisms and accelerating the pace of implementation of HADP projects across Jammu and Kashmir.

## DC Kulgam visits Qaimoh area; Reviews key Development Projects, functioning of Tehsil Office

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

**KULGAM, MARCH 05:** Deputy Commissioner (DC) Kulgam, Shahzad Alam, today visited the Qaimoh area to take stock of various ongoing development projects and review the functioning of the Tehsil Office.

During the visit, the DC inspected the construction of the Sub-District Hospital building at Qaimoh.

He was informed that the work on the project is nearing completion.



The DC directed the concerned authorities to expedite the remaining finishing works and ensure completion within a month.

He also inspected the under-construction 1x 33 Mtr Span Girder Kawaki Bazar Bridge, where he reviewed the progress of work and instructed the executing agency to maintain the pace of construction and adhere strictly to the stipulated timeline.

Later, at the Tehsil Office Qaimoh, the Deputy Commissioner reviewed the functioning of the revenue administration. He inspected mutation registers and Jamabandi records to assess the efficiency and transparency of revenue services.

The DC also took stock of the verification and freezing process of 5 Jamabandis. He further reviewed the delivery of services under Revenue Plus and the issuance of certificates through Jan-Sugam.

Emphasizing transparency, accountability, and efficiency in public service delivery, the DC directed officials to ensure the timely disposal of pending cases and the seamless provision of services to the public.

During the visit, the DC was accompanied by ACR, Riyaz Ahmad Shah; Executive Engineer, Shabir Ahmad Tak; CMO, Tehsildar Qaimoh and other officers.

## DC Budgam chairs DLIC Meeting, approves 382 Cases under Mission YUVA

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

**BUDGAM, MARCH 5:** Deputy Commissioner (DC) Budgam, Athar Aamir Khan, today chaired a meeting of the District Level Implementation Committee (DLIC) under Mission YUVA at the District Headquarters to review the progress of youth entrepreneurship initiatives and consider cases submitted under the mission.

During the meeting, 382 cases, duly verified by the Small Business Development Units (SBDUs), were placed before the committee for consideration. After thorough evaluation, the committee approved all 382 cases for financial assistance, capacity building and handholding support under Mission YUVA.

The approved cases include a wide range of entrepreneurial ventures, spanning traditional crafts such as shawl embroidery, sozni, aari work, tailoring and cutting units, carpentry and joinery workshops, as well as modern and service-oriented businesses including load carriers, dairy units, repair shops, stationery and printing units, food businesses, retail stores, packaging units and other micro-enterprise activities.

Speaking on the occasion, the DC said that Mission YUVA is a transformative initiative aimed at empowering young men and women by enabling them to become self-reliant entrepreneurs. He emphasised that the objective of the programme is not only to provide financial support but also to create a sustainable ecosystem where youth have access to training, market linkages, guidance and long-term mentorship.

The DC directed all concerned departments, banks and implementing agencies to ensure time-bound sanctioning, hassle-free disbursement and continuous mentoring of the approved cases. He further instructed that Detailed Project Reports (DPRs) must be completed without delay and stressed that no application should remain pending unnecessarily at any level.

The DC stressed the need for regular monitoring, skill development programmes and facilitation of market access so that young entrepreneurs can expand and scale their businesses effectively.

The meeting was attended by General Manager, DIC Budgam; ACR Budgam, CPO Budgam, SDM Beerwah, SDM Khansahib, SDM Chadoora, Deputy Director Employment, LDM Budgam, District Nodal Officer, representatives from JKEDI, and other concerned officers.

## Awareness camp organised for Senior Citizens

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

**RAJOURI, MARCH 05:** An Awareness Camp for senior citizens was today organized by the District Administration Rajouri under the Atal Vayo Abhyuday Yojana (AVYAY) to spread awareness among elderly citizens about their rights, welfare schemes and services available for their well-being.

The programme began with a welcome address by District Social Welfare Officer (DSWO) Abdul Raheem. He highlighted the efforts of the Social Welfare Department in ensuring that senior citizens receive the respect, care and support they deserve.

He also emphasized the importance of such awareness programmes in connecting elderly citizens with the schemes meant for their welfare.

The event was graced by MLA Rajouri Iftkar Ahmed, along with Additional Deputy Commissioner Malikzada Shaerazul Haq who appreciated the initiative taken by the district administration. They acknowledged the valuable role played by senior citizens in shaping society

and stressed the need to ensure their dignity, security and well-being.

A resource person from the Medical Department delivered an informative session on active ageing and maintaining a healthy lifestyle, encouraging senior citizens to stay physically active, maintain a balanced diet and prioritize regular health check-ups for a healthier life.

Advocate Ashfaq Lone from the District Legal Services Authority (DLSA) addressed the gathering and sensitized participants about the provisions of the Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act, 2007, explaining the legal protections available to senior citizens and the support mechanisms in place for their welfare.

A representative from J&K Bank also interacted with the participants and shared information about various financial inclusion schemes and banking facilities designed specifically for senior citizens, encouraging them to make use of these services.

One of the most heartening parts of the programme was the motivational interaction by senior citizens themselves, who shared their

experiences and inspired others with their positive outlook and active engagement in life.

On the occasion, pension sanction orders were distributed, wheelchairs and free-of-cost medicines were provided to eligible senior citizens.

To honour their lifelong contributions, senior citizens who have excelled in fields such as literature, agriculture, horticulture, social service, medical services and ex-servicemen were felicitated, acknowledging their dedication and service to society.

The camp also featured information stalls set up by the Social Welfare Department, AYUSH Department, Medical Department and J&K Bank, where participants received guidance and information about various schemes and services.

The programme witnessed enthusiastic participation from senior citizens and concluded with a renewed commitment from the district administration to continue working for the welfare, dignity and empowerment of elderly citizens in Rajouri district.

## ADC Budgam holds meeting to finalize arrangements for Wildlife Guard examination by JKSSB

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

**BUDGAM, MARCH 05:** District administration Budgam, today conducted a meeting in the conference hall Budgam to finalise the arrangements for OMR-based written examination for the post of Wildlife Guard (Forest Department), which is scheduled to be conducted by the Jammu and Kashmir Services Selection Board (JKSSB) on March 08, 2026.

The meeting was chaired by Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC) Budgam, Mehraj-ud-din Shah and was attended by Additional Secretary, JKSSB, besides senior officers and officials from various departments. Among those present were DTO Budgam, DIO Budgam, ARTO Budgam, representatives from the Police,

Education Department, Traffic Police, along with Centre Superintendents, Deputy Superintendents, Magistrates/ Observers and Heads of Institutions of the designated examination centres.

During the meeting, the ADC reviewed in detail the arrangements being put in place for the conduct of the examination. He emphasized the need for close coordination among all departments to ensure the examination is conducted in a fair, transparent and smooth manner.

Threadbare discussions were held on key aspects including deployment of magistrates and observers, security arrangements, transportation, confidentiality of examination material, availability of basic facilities at examination



centres, and implementation of Standard Operating Procedures issued for the examination.

The Additional Secretary, JKSSB,

briefed the meeting about the examination guidelines, protocols to be followed at examination centres, and the responsibilities

of the supervisory staff. He stressed strict adherence to the procedures laid down by the Board to ensure transparency and integrity in the conduct of the examination.

ADC Budgam directed all concerned officers to ensure that necessary arrangements including security, traffic regulation, and logistical support are put in place well in advance. He also instructed centre superintendents and other supervisory staff to remain vigilant and ensure that the examination is conducted smoothly without any inconvenience to the candidates.

All departments were asked to maintain close coordination and ensure timely deployment of staff and resources for the successful conduct of the examination across all designated centres in the District.

## SWD B'la holds awareness programme for Senior Citizens in Rafiabad

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

**BARAMULLA, MARCH 05:** A sensitization and awareness programme under the National Action Plan for Senior Citizens on the Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens (MWPCS) Act was organized by the Tehsil Social Welfare Office Rafiabad, Social Welfare Department Baramulla, at Town Hall Watergam today.

Tehsildar Watergam, Farooq Ahmad Dar, was the Chief Guest on the occasion. Resource persons including Syed Junaid, Station House Officer Daniwacha, Advocate Umar Rashid, Member District Legal Services Authority and officials from ICDS and Education departments delivered speeches highlighting the rights, protection, and dignity of senior citizens.

Tehsil Social Welfare Officer Sopore, also addressed the gathering and spoke about various welfare schemes of the Social



Welfare Department.

## Mission YUVA: 362 Cases approved by DLIC Anantnag DDC Directs expeditious processing of Loan Cases

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

**ANANTNAG, MARCH 05:** In a significant step to boost self employment in the district, Mission YUVA District Level Implementation Committee (DLIC), Anantnag today approved 362 cases during its 26th meeting held at the DC office.

The meeting was chaired by District Development Commissioner (DDC), Chairman DLIC, Dr. Bilal Mohiud Din Bhat and was attended by ADDC (DNO, Mission YUVA), DD Employment, DSWO, representative of GM DIC, District LBM, DNO JKEDI, DDM NABARD and other concerned officials from Employment Department, Banks and other institutions.

Sector-wise, the approved cases included 114 in Retail, 107 in Transport, and 34 in the Service sector, besides other small business



ventures associated with meaningful employment. With these 362 fresh cases, the district's tally of sanctioned

cases has reached 5511, out of which 2215 have received bank loans so far.

Notably, 29.5 percent of the applications were submitted by women aspirants, indicating their increasing interest in entrepreneurial initiatives in the district.

Addressing the meeting, the DDC directed the concerned departments and banking institutions to ensure expeditious processing of loan cases and provide necessary facilitation to the applicants so the benefits of Mission YUVA are accrued by them. He emphasized the need for close coordination between banks and line departments for smooth implementation of the scheme.

At the conclusion, the DLIC reaffirmed the commitment to strengthening entrepreneurship avenues, promoting self-reliance and providing sustainable employment opportunities to the youth through Mission YUVA in the district.

HT EDITORIAL

Enforce ban on sale of cigarettes around educational institutions vigorously

The authorities in the different districts of Kashmir valley have issued stern instructions that tobacco and tobacco related products should not be sold in the close vicinity of educational institutions. The instructions are more welcome as they aim to keep the young generation away from cigarettes and other tobacco products. Such instructions lead to reforms in the society and as such are hailed by one and all.

It is not for the first time that such orders have been issued by the people at helm. In the past many such orders were issued by the concerned department but the implementation part was found to be missing on the ground. Vendors involved with the sale of cigarettes and other tobacco related products could be seen selling their stuff adjacent to the schools and colleges across the Kashmir valley. As such the students of these educational institutions easily fell prey in the dragnet.

One can hope that this time around the instructions are implemented in letter and spirit so that the young students remain aloof from the tobacco related products. Over the years the Government of India in close collaboration with respective state and union territory governments has launched Nasha Mukta Abhiyan. The Abhiyan has been launched so as to make the country free from the menace of drugs and drug addiction. The success of the Abhiyan depends upon the pro-active approach of the respective governments.

It has been observed that the vendors selling cigarettes and related stuff besides selling packets of cigarettes also sell loose cigarettes and bidis. Since a young student may not be able to purchase a complete pack of cigarettes or bidis, he would purchase one or two so that his stock of the day is completed. In the directions issued earlier or this time around it is quite clear that the vendors selling tobacco related stuff should not sell loose cigarettes or bidis.

This aspect of the order is also looked upon with damn suspicion by the violators and they continue to sell loose cigarettes or bidis. The officers and officials should look into this matter more seriously so that stern action is taken against the culprits. Nobody should take the law in their hands and whosoever does so need to be accounted for their actions. Once action is taken against one or two the others will fall in line and they would abide by the concerned instructions.

Chief Patron Of Lubaab Publications Group: Syed Sad Ud Din Bukhari (Saidi), Printer Publisher, Owner And Editor: Syed Jahangir Bukhari, Printed At: Lubaab Publications, Radio Colony Gund Hassibhat Lawaipora Srinagar -190017, Gen. Manager: Sheikh Mushtaq Ahmad Cell No - 9697071471, Editorial Section: 7006846797, Multimedia Section: 9419008414, Advertisement Section: 9697071471 RNI No: Jkeng/2011/39231 dailyheadlinestoday@gmail.com headlinestoday2024@gmail.com

A Month To Reclaim The Soul



SAHIL BILAL

Ramadan is often understood simply as the act of abstaining from food and drink during daylight hours. Yet, its deeper purpose, as revealed in the Qur'an and Prophetic teachings, extends far beyond physical restraint. As the ninth month of the lunar calendar, Ramadan serves as a coherent system designed to reorient the human psyche toward a state of heightened moral awareness. It functions not merely as ritual abstinence, but as an integrated framework for ethical discipline, spiritual focus, and communal reform. When viewed through both its legal framework and moral vision, Ramadan emerges as a month designed to transform both the individual and society.

The Qur'anic Foundation of Fasting

The basis for the observance of Ramadan is rooted in the Qur'anic revelation. The primary directive is established in Surah Al-Baqarah, which situates the practice within a historical continuum of monotheistic tradition. The text states: "O you who have believed, decreed upon you is fasting as it was decreed upon those before you that you may become righteous"(Qur'an 2:183). By referencing prior civilizations, the Qur'an frames fasting not as an isolated innovation, but as a long-standing method used for the cultivation of character. The scripture identifies Ramadan as the month in which the holy text was first revealed, serving as a "guidance for the people and clear proofs of guidance and criterion" (Qur'an 2:185). Consequently, the act of fasting is inextricably linked to the commemoration of revelation. The legal exemptions provided for the sick and the traveler illustrate a theological pragmatism; the objective is to reach a specific ethical state rather than to endure unnecessary hardship.

Prophetic Traditions and Discipline

While the Qur'an provides the legislative mandate, the recorded tradi-



tions and practices of the Prophet Muhammad [SAW] provide the methodology for the fast. Authentic narrations emphasize that the physical mechanics of the ritual are insufficient without a corresponding internal discipline. As recorded in the collection of Sahih al-Bukhari, the Prophet [SAW] said, "Fasting is a shield." This suggests a protective function, implying that the practitioner is in a state of vigilance, guarding the self against impulses that move away from the ethical ideal. The concept of spiritual merit and the removal of past errors is a recurring theme. One tradition states: "Whoever fasts Ramadan with faith and seeking reward, his previous sins will be forgiven." This underscores the necessity of Niyyah, or conscious intention—the prerequisite that distinguishes a religious act from a mundane one. Furthermore, the Prophet emphasized that the abandonment of food and drink is of no value if the practitioner does not simultaneously abandon "falsehood and malicious behavior," thereby reinforcing the link between ritual performance and moral conduct.

The Concept of Taqwa and the Ego

The primary goal of Ramadan, as stated in the Qur'an, is the attainment of Taqwa. Often translated as "God-consciousness" or "mindful piety," Taqwa represents a state of moral awareness where the individual is aware of the Divine presence, which in turn regulates their behavior. Ramadan serves as an intensive training period for this faculty through the systematic restraint of the Nafs, or the lower self. Classical scholars have extensively analyzed this process. The 11th-century scholar Al-

Ghazali categorized fasting into three levels. The first is the fast of the general public, involving restraint of the stomach and private parts. The second is the fast of the elite, which involves restraining the senses—eyes, ears, tongue, and limbs—from wrongdoing. The highest level is the fast of the "elite of the elite, which involves restraining the heart from worldly thoughts and focusing entirely on the Divine. Al-Ghazali viewed fasting as a primary means of disciplining the appetitive soul and allowing the intellect to lead over desire.

Psychological and Ethical Dimensions

The impact of Ramadan involves a significant process of behavioral change. The shift in daily routine and the practice of delayed gratification contribute to an increased capacity for self-regulation. The fast interrupts routine habits and compels self-reflection. Observing its precise timings cultivates discipline and attentiveness. Beyond the individual, Ramadan possesses significant socio-ethical dimensions that reinforce communal solidarity. The shared experience of hunger serves as a physical equalizer, bridging the gap between different socio-economic classes. The collective breaking of the fast and the congregational night prayers strengthen social bonds and foster a sense of belonging to the global community. The ethical framework of the month is deeply intertwined with charity. Prophetic traditions record that the Prophet Muhammad [SAW] was the most generous of people, and he was even more generous during Ramadan. This precedent dictates that the personal experience of deprivation must translate into a proactive effort to help

others. The fast is intended to produce an empathetic response, transforming a temporary physical state into a long-term commitment to social justice.

Contemporary Relevance

In the context of modern consumerist societies, the observance of Ramadan offers a counter-narrative to the prevailing culture of immediate gratification. The ritualized restriction of consumption challenges the notion that human well-being is primarily tied to the satisfaction of physical appetites. In an era characterized by digital distractions and fragmented attention, the emphasis on reflection and focused devotion provides a psychological reprieve. Scholars like Ibn Taymiyyah argued that the purpose of fasting is to allow the soul to dominate the body's inclinations. While contemporary discourse often focuses on the physiological benefits of fasting—such as metabolic health—from a theological perspective, these are viewed as secondary effects. The primary relevance of Ramadan lies in its ability to provide a structured method for ethical renewal and the assertion of human choice over biological impulses. It remains a robust mechanism for maintaining religious identity and ethical consistency in a globalized landscape.

Conclusion

Ramadan reveals itself as a carefully structured path of spiritual and ethical renewal. Rooted in the Qur'anic mandate and refined by Prophetic tradition, the month of fasting serves as a method for the cultivation of mindfulness. Through the disciplined regulation of the ego and the prioritization of intention, the practitioner undergoes a psychological and moral recalibration. The ritual transcends the individual, fostering social cohesion and requiring ethical engagement with the community. In reclaiming restraint over appetite, attention, and impulse, Ramadan ultimately seeks to restore something deeper—the sovereignty of the soul over the self.

The author is a young author and columnist recognized with a National Award in 2025. His work explores the intersection of Islamic thought, ethics, and the modern condition, with a particular focus on youth intellectual development. He can be reached at sahilbilallone6@gmail.com

Between Poverty and Pressure: Why Child Marriage Still Exists In J&K



MOOL RAJ

Child marriage may be declining in official records, but on the ground it continues to shape the lives of many girls. In parts of Jammu and Kashmir — particularly in rural and economically marginalised communities — early marriage has not disappeared. According to the National Family Health Survey (NFHS-5, 2019–21), around 5% of women aged 20–24 in Jammu and Kashmir were married before the legal age of 18, a drop from previous years. The median age at first marriage for women aged 25–49 now stands at 23.6 years, reflecting gradual improvement.

The numbers show progress, but statistics alone cannot reveal the emotional cost carried by girls whose education and childhood end prematurely.

A Visit to Village Korga, Dansal (Jammu)

During field visits to one of the most backward rural pockets of Jammu district — Village Korga in Dansal — we met a young woman who agreed to share her story. She had been a student at Government Girls School, Korga, studying in Class 11. As the eldest child, she carried responsibilities far beyond her age. Her younger sister, 15, is speech-impaired, and her brother is 13.

She remembered the day everything changed. "One day after school, I came home and saw everyone smiling at me," she said. "I asked my mother what had happened. She replied, 'We have fixed your marriage.' My father then showed me the groom's photo."

When she saw the picture, she froze. "He looked my father's age. He was 37 — almost double my age. I went into shock. I left the kitchen and went to my room. That night, I cried a lot. I had dreams for my life. I wanted to study, maybe go to college. But everything collapsed in that moment."

When she asked her mother why such a decision was taken, her mother broke down and said, "I don't know how many years I will live. Before I die, I want to marry you with my own hands."

Her father struggled with alcohol and smoking and rarely cared about the children. Her mother worked in households to earn whatever she could. Poverty and insecurity shaped every decision.

"I accepted it after that. I never asked again," she said quietly.

Poverty, Pressure, and Silence

The family couldn't afford the wedding. They sought assistance from the Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board, which provided financial support. The government's marriage assistance scheme gave them ₹50,000. Neighbours contributed ration and small household items.

"No one came to ask why they were marrying me at this age," she said. "No one questioned it."

She recalled another painful moment on the wedding day. "The groom asked for a gold ring. We didn't have money even for basic expenses. My mother somehow arranged it. I left my home with many questions in my heart."

She became a mother at 18. Today, she has a baby girl.

"Life goes on," she said, her voice cracking. "But sometimes I think — if I had been born in a rich family, maybe I would be in college now."

At that point, tears rolled down her face, and the interview had to stop.

Why Early Marriage Still Happens

Her experience reflects harsh realities still present in some communities:

Poverty: Families struggling for survival often see marriage as reducing responsibility.

Parental insecurity: Illness or fear of the future pushes parents to marry daughters early.

Addiction and neglect: Substance abuse among fathers leaves mothers to make desperate decisions.

Silence of society: Neighbours and relatives avoid intervening.

Cultural pressure: Marriage is prioritised over education, especially for girls.

Awareness campaigns under initiatives like Bal Vivah Mukta Bharat and Beti Bachao Beti Padhao are active in many villages of the Jammu division. Departments and NGOs conduct seminars on the legal age of marriage, the importance of consent, and the dangers of teenage pregnancy. These efforts have helped reduce rates, yet stories like the one from Korga show how slow social change can be.

The Larger Context

Historically, child marriage has been more prevalent in rural India. A 2009 report by the Registrar General of India recorded higher rates in states like Jharkhand, West Bengal, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, and Assam. Jammu and Kashmir reports comparatively lower numbers today, but isolated cases still occur.

The concern isn't just the age of marriage. It's the power imbalance, the lack of consent, and the emotional trauma. When a 16-year-old girl is married to a man twice her age, the issue becomes one of lost childhood and denied agency.

Moving Forward

Reducing child marriage further requires continuous, consistent effort:

Ongoing community dialogue: Parents need repeated engagement, not one-time lectures.

Strengthening school retention: Girls must be supported to complete higher secondary and pursue college.

Economic support for vulnerable families: Poverty pushes early marriage more than culture does.

Encouraging intervention: Silence from neighbours and relatives must stop.

Listening to girls: Consent must be real, not symbolic or forced.

NFHS-5 shows that Jammu and Kashmir is moving in the right direction. The challenge is making sure progress reaches every household.

As the young woman from Korga said before we left, "If parents understand what early marriage does to a girl's life, they will think differently."

Her voice represents countless others who never get the chance to speak.

THE AUTHOR IS A REGULAR COLUMNIST AND FREELANCE WRITER

# Holy Ramadan: Recalibrating Body, Mind and the Modern Way of Life



■ **MOHAMMAD HANIEF**

As the holy month of Ramadan begins, millions of people across the world enter a period of disciplined fasting, spiritual reflection, and moral introspection. From dawn to dusk, food and drink are set aside—not as an act of deprivation, but as a conscious exercise in restraint. While the spiritual essence of Ramadan remains paramount, the month also offers a profound opportunity for physical rejuvenation and psychological reset. In a world increasingly burdened by lifestyle disorders, chronic stress, and relentless consumption, Ramadan presents an alternative rhythm—one that encourages moderation, metabolic balance, and emotional clarity.

Modern science has taken growing interest in structured fasting, particularly intermittent fasting, which closely mirrors the daily fasting pattern observed during Ramadan. During fasting hours, the body transitions from using readily available glucose to tapping into stored fat reserves for energy. This metabolic shift improves insulin sensitivity, regulates blood sugar fluctuations, and enhances the body's capacity to burn excess fat. For individuals struggling with sedentary habits and erratic eating patterns, this shift can initiate meaningful physiological recalibration.

The digestive system, often overworked by constant snacking and irregular meals, receives a scheduled interval of rest during Ramadan. Contemporary lifestyles rarely allow the gastrointestinal tract time to recover; frequent intake of processed foods and sugary beverages keeps metabolic pathways in continuous motion. By limiting meals to pre-dawn and sunset hours, Ramadan introduces structure. This discipline can improve digestive efficiency, regulate hunger hormones, and reduce unnecessary caloric consumption—provided that meals are balanced rather than indulgent.

Weight management is one of the most visible outcomes of mindful fasting. When Suhoor and Iftar consist of nutrient-dense foods—whole grains, lean proteins, fruits, vegetables, and adequate hydration—the body benefits from steady energy release and improved metabolism. Excessive consumption of fried foods and refined sugars, however, can counteract these benefits. Ramadan's health potential lies not merely in abstinence, but in moderation and mindful nourishment.

Cardiovascular health also stands to gain from disciplined fasting. Reduced caloric intake and improved fat metabolism may lower harmful cholesterol levels and triglycerides. Blood pressure regulation can improve when salt-heavy and processed foods are minimized. Additionally, abstinence from smoking during fasting hours often becomes an opportunity for gradual cessation. For many, Ramadan serves as a turning point in breaking nicotine dependence, offering measurable benefits for heart and lung health.

Beyond the physical dimension, Ramadan exerts a powerful influence on mental well-being. The month imposes a deliberate slowing of pace. Structured prayer schedules, reduced distractions, and moments of introspection create an environment conducive to mindfulness. In a digital age characterized by constant notifications and cognitive overload, the rhythm of fasting encourages focus and intentional living.

The psychological benefits of fasting extend to emotional regulation. Voluntarily managing hunger and thirst strengthens impulse control and patience. This discipline often translates into greater resilience in daily life. By consciously restraining not only appetite but also anger, negative speech, and harmful habits, individuals cultivate a balanced mental state. Emotional clarity frequently emerges from this practice of self-governance.

Emerging research on fasting also points toward cellular repair mechanisms. Periods of caloric restriction may stimulate autophagy, a process in which the body removes damaged cells and regenerates healthier ones. While scientific exploration continues, early findings suggest that structured fasting can reduce inflammatory markers associated with chronic dis-



eases. Inflammation plays a central role in conditions ranging from heart disease to metabolic syndrome; therefore, any intervention that moderates inflammatory responses carries potential long-term benefits.

Ramadan's impact on immune regulation is similarly significant. Balanced post-sunset meals rich in vitamins, antioxidants, and minerals strengthen the body's natural defenses. Dates, fruits, soups, and whole foods commonly consumed during Iftar provide essential nutrients that support immunity. Adequate hydration between sunset and dawn is critical in maintaining kidney function and preventing fatigue or dehydration-related complications.

Sleep patterns during Ramadan undergo noticeable adjustment. The early pre-dawn meal alters conventional routines, yet many individuals adapt by developing structured sleep cycles and disciplined time management. When approached thoughtfully, this reorganization can enhance productivity and reduce late-night digital consumption. The emphasis on purposeful scheduling reinforces a sense of control over daily activities, countering the disorientation often associated with modern multitasking culture.

The communal dimension of Ramadan

further amplifies its psychological benefits. Shared meals, collective worship, and charitable initiatives strengthen social bonds. Social connectedness is a well-established determinant of mental health, associated with lower anxiety levels and improved emotional resilience. The month's emphasis on generosity and empathy shifts focus from individual consumption to collective well-being, fostering a sense of belonging and shared purpose.

Importantly, Ramadan also challenges the culture of excess that dominates contemporary society. Constant availability of food and convenience has contributed to rising obesity rates, metabolic disorders, and lifestyle-induced illnesses. By imposing daily restraint, Ramadan disrupts habitual overconsumption. It teaches that hunger, when experienced voluntarily and temporarily, can heighten gratitude and recalibrate one's relationship with nourishment.

However, it is essential to approach fasting responsibly. Ramadan is not a substitute for medical care, nor is it universally appropriate. Individuals with chronic illnesses, pregnant or breastfeeding women, elderly persons with medical vulnerabilities, and those requiring regular medication must seek professional guidance. Islamic teachings themselves prioritize health and

provide exemptions where fasting may cause harm. The principle underlying Ramadan is not hardship, but balance.

The lasting impact of Ramadan depends largely on what follows it. If individuals revert immediately to unhealthy patterns after the month concludes, many of the gains may diminish. Yet for those who carry forward the lessons of moderation, mindful eating, and emotional discipline, Ramadan becomes more than a temporary observance. It becomes a foundation for sustained well-being.

The broader lesson of Ramadan's health dimension lies in its holistic philosophy. It integrates physical restraint with ethical awareness and spiritual reflection. It reminds individuals that wellness is not merely the absence of disease, but the presence of balance—between consumption and restraint, activity and rest, individuality and community.

In an era defined by chronic stress, digital overload, and dietary imbalance, Ramadan offers an annual opportunity to recalibrate. It challenges the assumption that constant indulgence equals comfort. Instead, it demonstrates that measured restraint can restore equilibrium. The body responds to discipline with improved efficiency; the mind responds to reflection with clarity.

Ultimately, Ramadan affirms a simple yet profound truth: healing often begins with intentional pause. By aligning biological rhythms with spiritual discipline, the month provides a structured pathway toward renewal. It does not promise miraculous cures, nor does it claim to replace medical intervention. Rather, it offers a framework through which individuals can rediscover moderation, resilience, and mindful living.

As each sunset breaks the fast and each dawn begins anew, Ramadan quietly reinforces a principle increasingly validated by science and experience alike—that balance, not excess, sustains health. In the harmony of body, mind, and faith lies the enduring wisdom of this sacred month.

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## Dr. S. Anukriti: An Inspiration for Women



■ **DR. PRIYANKA SAURABH**

During her education, Dr. S. Anukriti received the National Award from the Government of India, the GE Fund Scholarship in the United States, the Vickrey and Harris Awards, and a research scholarship from Columbia University. She also received the World Econometric Society's inaugural Young Researcher Award. A former fellow at Harvard University, Boston (USA), Dr. Anukriti is currently a fellow at Columbia University, Manhattan (USA) and the Institute of Labor Economics, Bonn (Germany). In addition to India and the United States, she has traveled to more than twenty countries, including Canada, Peru, Puerto Rico, Bermuda, England, Scotland, Spain, France, Germany, Italy, Sweden, China, Hong Kong, Singapore, Bangladesh, Kenya, and Ethiopia. Dr. Anukriti specializes in development economics and, while serving as a consultant with the World Bank nearly a decade and a half ago, worked on a variety of topics, including gender equality, the economic status of women globally, women's illiteracy and backwardness, and child malnutrition. Dr. Anukriti, who has been living in the United States for the past two decades, may now be an American citizen, but she has remained a true American citizen. He still has a deep attachment to his birthplace Narnaul (Haryana) and his native country India and the soil of India.

Looking at Dr. Anukriti, one might not imagine that this ordinary-looking young woman is the prestigious Dr. S. Anukriti, holding the important position of Senior Economist at the World Bank, Washington, D.C. (USA). But it's true. Upon joining the

World Bank as an economist, Dr. Anukriti also became a member of the ten-member Human Resources Committee of this apex banking institution that regulates the global economy. Currently, she is co-chair of the World Bank's Center for Research on Women and Jobs, a member of the Technical Advisory Group of the PF-Impact Consortium, an active contributor to the Development Impact Blog, and a member of two committees, "We-Define" and "We-Connect," of the Bangladesh-based social science research institute, the Brac Institute of Governance and Development. Earlier, Dr. Anukriti's husband Siddharth Ramalingam, who was a professor of economics at BC University, Boston (USA) for seven years, has also been a professor at Harvard University and a senior consultant at the World Bank and is currently working as a strategic and planning manager in a multinational company based in Washington DC (USA).

Dr. Anukriti is extraordinary despite being ordinary. Her outstanding achievements have made her a role model and source of inspiration for young people, especially women. Dr. Anukriti has been incredibly talented and extraordinary since childhood. She never took a single rupee as pocket money from her parents, nor did she ever stand on the street and buy anything from a street vendor. She never attended a single day of tuition, yet she set a record by scoring 94.6 percent in the CBSE 10+2 (non-medical) exam. Dr. Anukriti was born in Narnaul, Haryana, but spent eighteen years in Hisar and seven in Delhi. Now, for twenty years, she has lived in America, one of the world's most developed and prosperous countries. Yet, she has never been touched by ostentation or ostentation. Whether it's summer or winter, she adapts to the Indian environment as soon as she arrives. She has been travelling by air for two decades, has visited more than twenty countries, even travels locally by metro or AC bus, but apart from a bicycle, she does not even know how to ride an Activa.

The beloved daughter of senior literary



figure and educationist Dr. Ram Niwas 'Manav' and former economics lecturer Dr. Kanta Bharti, and a gifted individual with exceptional talent, Dr. Anukriti has achieved world-class achievements. After earning a BA in Economics (Hons) from St. Stephen's College, Delhi, and an MA (Economics) from the Delhi School of Economics, she simultaneously received three degrees: an MA (Economics), an MPhil, and a PhD from Columbia University, Manhattan (USA), one of the world's leading universities.

Dr. Anukriti, who always excelled in her studies, has received education from world-class institutions, but unlike other students, she never faced any difficulty in getting admission. After completing her 10+2 education in schools in Hisar, she completed her BA Economics (Hons) from St. Stephen's College, Delhi. She then applied for an MA (International Relations) at Jawaharlal Nehru University, Delhi, an MA (Economics) at the Delhi School of Economics, and an MA (Mathematics) at the Indian Statistical Institute, and was selected for all three. Of these, she chose the Delhi School of Economics. Furthermore, after completing her MA (Economics) from the Delhi School of Economics, she applied for a PhD at six leading US universities: Rochester, Brown University, Wisconsin-Madison, Columbia University, New York, and Maryland, and was selected by all six. Anukriti chose Columbia University, Manhattan (New York), and earned three degrees: an MA (Economics), an MPhil, and a PhD. But even more remarkable is that after earning her PhD, she was appointed to seventeen universities or equivalent institutions in six countries, including the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, Sweden, Australia, and India, of which she joined BC University. Dr. Anukriti was never a financial burden on her parents. During her education and research, she received awards such as the GE Fund Scholarship in the United States, the Vickrey and Harris Awards, and the Columbia University Research Scholarship. During her six-year PhD program at Columbia University, she did not have to rely on even a single rupee of financial assistance from her parents.

Dr. Anukriti says, "I wouldn't call my journey difficult, but looking back, I realize that few people can make the journey from a small, backward town in Haryana to the World Bank. It's especially difficult for girls and women to prioritize their education and career in many states of India. However, thanks to the support and encouragement of my family, I didn't face any such

difficulties. My parents raised me and my brother (who became an Indian Police Service officer) in a way that never limited our goals or aspirations to our city, state, or country. Initially, moving from a small town in Haryana to St. Stephen's College in Delhi felt like a significant difference, and it took some time to adjust. However, the journey forward wasn't too difficult for me. Therefore, I would like to urge parents and guardians to carefully consider their children's early education, as it impacts their entire lives and careers." "Don't impose your interests on your children; consider their own interests; let them decide their own path and destination. Parental interests are the biggest obstacle to children's personality development. All parents want their children to become doctors or engineers, which is not appropriate. There are many other fields where, if children are allowed to pursue their own desires and interests, they too can achieve outstanding success. Yes, parental guidance and encouragement are essential for children. I don't think I would have achieved so much without my parents' guidance. My parents and other family members never discriminated between me and my brother, nor did they pressure me to marry young or focus less on my career. As a child, I was always encouraged to study and pursue the highest education; I was never burdened with household chores. Now, I also have the full support of my husband, Professor Siddharth Ramalingam; we both support each other's decisions and careers equally. We have a little daughter, Mili (Mrinalini), who has filled our lives with happiness.

All of India is truly proud of its capable and brilliant daughter, Dr. S. Anukriti. Today's young generation can learn a lot from her, drawing inspiration from her to not only shape their futures but also to raise their reputations both domestically and internationally.

**The Author is a PhD (Political Science), is a poet and social thinker**

**Views, Opinions, facts etc Expressed by the Authors are their Own and Headlines Today doesn't acknowledge the viewpoint in any manner. And the claims made by the advertisers, promoters through their write-ups need to be ascertained by the readers and Headlines Today Shall not be held responsible for any misleading information in any manner...**

# Concrete Walls: The Right Fit for Indian Homes



■ **SANJAY GOENKA**

Everyone is familiar with concrete. One of the most commonly used, versatile building materials in the world, it has existed in various forms for centuries.

In the busy construction world, more and more people want strong structures that last a long time.

Concrete strength is crucial in home construction for ensuring structural integrity, safety, and long-term durability of foundations, beams, and columns.

Its strength and durability enable it to support heavy structures over long periods of time.

Concrete is a reliable and cost-effective material that can withstand heavy loads and harsh environmental conditions. Its adaptability to different shapes and sizes enables its use in a wide range of applications, from small residential projects to major infrastructure developments.

Concrete also provides economic benefits, as it is cost-effective and low-maintenance, saving money for property owners.

## ■ Cost Effective

Every decision you make while building your home affects your long-term budget. And while many people focus on land,

labour, or finishings, one major cost-saving opportunity that often goes unnoticed is your concrete choice.

Concrete can be cheaper for housing projects over steel, asphalt, wood, and stone.

Additionally, concrete's long lifespan and low maintenance requirements mean that its overall cost of ownership is relatively low.

Concrete provides significant long-term cost savings through high durability, low maintenance requirements, and faster construction speeds compared to other materials. It reduces costs by minimising structural repairs and insurance expenses.

Concrete's many inherent benefits, such as fire resistance, sound insulation, robustness and minimum vibration, are widely recognised.

The ability of concrete to reduce the energy consumption of buildings in terms of reduced air conditioning and heating far outweighs its embodied CO2 footprint.

## ■ Fire Resistance

Concrete is resistant to fire, which makes it a good choice for buildings in areas prone to wildfires or other natural disasters.

In fire, concrete performs well – both as an engineered structure and as a material in its own right. It has the highest class A1 fire resistance classification due to its composition of cement and aggregate, which do not burn or emit toxic fumes and have a slow rate of heat transfer.

It is this slow rate of heat transfer that enables concrete to act as an effective fire shield not only between adjacent spaces, but also to protect itself from fire damage.



So, certain concrete structural elements like walls in a home act as a fire shield, protecting adjacent rooms from flames and maintaining their structural integrity despite exposure to intense heat.

It can withstand temperatures up to 1,000°C for over an hour, or resist collapse for 4 or more hours.

## ■ Environmental Advantages

Concrete offers significant environmental advantages due to its extreme durability, long lifespan, and recyclability, which reduce the need for raw materials and frequent repairs, thus saving natural

resources and reducing waste.

While other materials, such as wood, asphalt, and even certain metals, require frequent repairs and replacements, concrete is designed to withstand the test of time.

Concrete mixes use industrial waste like fly ash, which is a by-product of coal production. The use of industrial waste material reduces the need for virgin raw materials. Concrete structures require lower surface maintenance and have a longer lifespan, which helps contribute to mitigating climate change.

It naturally absorbs carbon dioxide over

the course of its long service life.

It is highly energy-efficient and has the ability to sequester over its life cycle, contributing to lower carbon emissions by minimising the demand for new resources and extending the lifecycle of precast elements.

Furthering its sustainability, concrete can often be reused following a demolition project. Concrete structures that have reached the end of their service life can be stripped, recycled and refurbished into new materials. This substitution helps to lower the carbon emissions associated with the overall production of concrete.

## ■ Durability and Strength

Have you ever wondered about the strong and stable structures that gracefully stand tall amidst changing seasons and continuous wear and tear?

Choosing the right foundation materials is essential for creating reliable, durable foundations that will stand the test of time.

Building a solid foundation is crucial to support the weight of the structure and distribute it evenly on the earth beneath it.

Concrete is ideal for building foundations due to its high strength, durability, and superior moisture resistance. It supports heavy, long-term loads, resists fire and pests, and can be reinforced with steel to prevent settling. Concrete withstands heavy loads and harsh weather conditions, and provides a stable, low-maintenance base suitable for residential buildings.

The author is CMD Hindcon Chemicals Limited Kolkata

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

Subject: Application ABDUL HAMID KHAN S/O GULZAR KHAN R/O BANGDARA RESHIPORA Tehsil KREERI for Issuance of EWS Financially weakened section in favour of his Words

**PUBLIC NOTICE**

Regarding the subject cited above the file in the office of the undersigned for the issuance of (Ews ) in favour of SUHAIL AHMAD KHAN ,ULFAT HAMEED ,AKASH HAMEED KHAN this connection a report of patwari halqa concerned has been sought which reveals that the applicant is currently residing in the village of BANGDARA RESHIPORA of Tehsil KREERI and having annual income 243930 // the details of family of the applicant are as follows

- 1..ABDUL HAMEED KHAN Head of Family 55 years D class contractor
- 2... ROSHNA BAGUM wife 50 years H/W
- 3..SUHAIL AH KHAN son 22 years student
- 4..ULFAT HAMEED daughter 21 years student
- 5....AKASH HAMEED son 19 years student
- 6...JUNAID HAMEED son 16 years student

According to report of patwari concerned that applicants family has not more than 5 acres of Land and does not have greater 1000 residential House.

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

**Naib Tehsild Kreeri**

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

Subject: Application TARIQ AHMAD ZARAGAR S/O ABDUL MAJEED ZARGAR R/O THINDIMA kreeri Tehsil KREERI for the issuance of OBC ( Other Backward classes in favor of AISHA TARIQ AAMINA TARIQ , RUKAYA TARIQ

**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 THINDIMA KREERI of Tehsil KREERI and belongs to the ZARGAR community having annual income 280000 // ( Two lack Eighty Thousand ) the details of family of the applicant are as follows

- 1...TARIQ AHMAD ZARGAR Head of family 50 Labour
- 2..AISHA TARIQ daughter 24 years Student
- 3... AMINA TARIQ daughter 18 years student
- 4....RUKAYA TARIQ 15 years student

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**

Government Of Jammu & Kashmir  
**OFFICE OF THE TEHSILDAR KALANTRA / KREERI**

Subject: Application ABDUL AHAD MIR S/O MOHAMMAD ABDULLAH MIR R/O KAKOTHAL Tehsil KREERI for issuance of RBA certificate in favour of son FAIZAN AHAD MIR & daughter SADIYA AHAD forthe issuance of RBA in his own 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 KAKORHAL of Tehsil KREERI and belongs to the MIR community having annual income 183000 // the details of family of the applicant are as follows

- 1..ABDUL AHAD MIR Head of Family 40 years farmer
- 2...DILSHADA BAGUM wife 35 years H/W
- 3...MEHNAZA AKHTER daughter 22 years student
- 4..FAIZAN AHAD MIR son 17 years student
- 5....SADIYA AHAD daughter 17 years student

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 TEHSILDAR KALANTRA**

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

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

**PUBLIC NOTICE**

The Registrar Births and Deaths (Block Development Officer Wagoora)/ chokedar hassubmitted case file pertainingto Birth of ZAINA BEGUM W/O AB KHALIQ MALIK R/O KALANTRA BALA Tehsil KREERI Distt. Baramulla having verified the date of Birth as 01/07/1967 and event has been shown to be occurred at HOME for issuance of delay order .In this connection.

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

**Sd/- Executive Magistrate 1st Class Kreeri**

**Public Notice**

This is for information of general public that the (Electric bill ) power connection is registered on my Fathers name AB GAFFAR SOFI S/O ..AB SAMAD SOFI R/O KREERI Now this Connection bearing Consumer ID NO 021204000455 wants to be registered on my MOHD ASHRAF SOFI S/O AB GAFFAR SOFI R/O KREERI .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 ofthis notice after that no objection will be entertained

**Name..MOHD ASHRAF SOFI**  
**S/O ... AB GAFFAR SOFI , R/O ...KREERI**

Government Of Jammu & Kashmir  
**OFFICE OF THE TEHSILDAR KALANTRA / KREERI**

Subject: Application of NASREENA BEGUM W/O ISHFAQ AH DEADER for the Issuance of ST ( SCHEDULE TRIBE Gujar and Bakerwal )in favour of self

**PUBLIC NOTICE**

Regarding the subject cited above, the applicant has submitted the file in the office of the undersigned for the issuance of ST . in this connection a report of patwari halqa concerned has been sought which reveals that the applicant is currently residing in village BANDI BALLA and belongs to the ST caste and GOJER DEADER community, having annual income is 150000 the details of the family of the applicant are as follows

- 1...MOHD ASLAM DEADER Father in Law 59 years Labour
- 2.... KHATOON BEGUM Mother in Law 58 years H/W
- 3...ISHFAQ AHMAD Husband 27 years Labour
- 4....NASREENA BEGUM self 25 years care giver in school
- 5...OSMAN ISHFAQ son 19 years infant
- 6...ISHEN ISHFAQ son 02 years infant
- 7...ARSHID ASLAM Brother in Law 04 years student

The applicant has applied for Issuance of ST ( SCHEDULE TRIBE Gujar & Bakerwal ) certificate in favour of Self

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

**NAIB TEHSILDAR KALANTRA**

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

Subject: Application of FAHMEEDA BANO S/O BILAL AHMAD WANI R/O WARIPORA BALA for the issuance of Dependent certificate

**PUBLIC NOTICE**

Regarding the subject cited above in this context a report sought from patwari halqa concerned .The report of patwari halqa concerned and the death certificate issued by competent Authority reveals that BILAL AHMAD WANI S/O AB AHAD WANI R/O WARIPORE Bala Tehsil kreeri has passed away on 04/12/2025

- Moreover family structure of the applicant is as under
- 1... FAHMEEDA BANO wife 38 years H/W widow
  - 2..ABRAR BILAL WANI son 15 years student unmarried
  - 3...MUZZAFAR BILAL son 09 years student minor

The applicant has applied for Issuance of Dependent certificate in favour of FAHMEEDA BANO 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**

I am applying for fresh Pesticide and Fertilizer License under the title of Malik Agrotech, deals in Pesticides , Fertilizers and other related items . situated at KHISIPORA , Kreeri, Baramulla. In this regard if anybody is having any objection may file the same to Chief Agriculture Officer Baramulla and PPO Lal Mandi Srinagar within the time period of 07 days from the date of Publication of this notice. After that no objection shall be entertained.

**AIJAZ AHMAD MALIK, S/o: GH RASOOL MALIK**  
**R/o . KHISIPORA, Kreeri) Cell No: +91 8493894820**

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

Subject: Application BILAL MANSOOR WAR S/O GHULAM MOHAMMAD WAR R/O SHEIKHPORA for issuance of RBA certificate in favour of self Tehsil KREERI forthe issuance of RBA in his own 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 SHEIKHPORA of Tehsil KREERI and belongs to the WAR community having annual income 666792// the details of family of the applicant are as follows

- 1..GH MOHD WAR self 63 years farmer income 144000
- 2.ZAINAB BAGUM wife 60 years H/W
- 3...BILAL MANSOOR WAR son 37 years Govt Employee 522792
- 4..MASRAT BEGUM daughter in Law 31 years s H/W
- 5....ALEEZA BILAL Grand daughter 07 years student

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 name has been wrongly written as IMRAN AHMAD TANTRAY R/O NAGBAL in my Aadhar card while my correct name is MOHAMMAD IMRAN TANTRAY R/O .NAGBAL Tehsil...kreeri which needs to be corrected if anybody having any objection in this regard he /she may file his /her objection in office of concerned aadhar authorities with in seven days from the publication of this notice after that no objection will be entertained

**Name..MOHAMMAD IMRAN TANTRAY**  
**R/O ...NAGBAL**

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

**NOTICE INVITING TENDERS**

**NIT NO.62 OF R&B/QAZIGUND/2025-26 /E-TENDERING/\_ 5730-45 | DATED: 04-03-2026**

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

| S.No | Name of Work                                                                    | Est. Cost (In Rs) | Basic Cost (In Rs) | GST Amount (In Rs) | T.D Cost | E/M   | Time            |
|------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|--------------------|--------------------|----------|-------|-----------------|
| 1    | Providing and fixing of C.I Mainhole Cover in Govt. Emergency Hospital Qazigund | 32226.40          | 27310.51           | 4915.89            | 200/=    | 645/= | 10 Working Days |

**Head of Account: MH: 8443**

**Class of Contractor: DEE Class**

**Position of AAA: Accorded vide order No.02-CMOK/Plg of 2026 Dated: 03-03-2026**

**Position of TS: Accorded**

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

| S. No.                                                          | Particulars                               | Dated                         |                       |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1                                                               | Date of Issue of Tender Notice            |                               | 04.03.2026            |
| 2                                                               | Period of Downloading of bidder documents | From 06.03.2026 To 12.03.2026 | (11:00 AM) (04:00 PM) |
| 3                                                               | Bid submission Start Date                 | From 06.03.2026               | (11:00 AM)            |
| 4                                                               | Bid Submission End Date                   | To 12.03.2026                 | (04:00 PM)            |
| 5                                                               | Date and time of opening of bid(online)   | 13.03.2026                    | (11:00 AM)            |
| In the office of Executive Engineer PWD(R&B) Division QAZIGUND. |                                           |                               |                       |

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

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

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

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

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

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

6. Thebidsfortheworkshallremainvalidforaperiodof120days from the date of Opening of Technical bids.

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

- a) Any bidder/tenderer withdraws his bid/tender during the period of bid validity or makes any modification in the terms and conditions of the bid.
- b) Failure of successful bidder to furnish the required performance security within specified time period before issue of letter of intent.

c) SuccessfulBidderfailstoexecutetheagreementwithin28daysafterfixationofcontract.

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

8. Instruction to bidders regarding e-tendering process.

a. Biddersareadvisedtodownloadbidsubmissionmanualfromthe'Downloads'optionaswellasfrom'Bidders Manual Kit" on website www.jktenders.gov.in to acquaint bid submission process.

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

c. ThebiddershavetosubmittheirbidsonlineinelectronicformatwithdigitalSignature.NoFinancialbidwillbe accepted in physical form.

d. Bids will be opened online as per time schedule mentionedinPara-1.

e. Biddersmustensuretouploadscannedcopyofallnecessarydocumentswithbid. Note: - Scan all the documents on 100 dpi with black and white option.

9. Thedepartmentwillnotberesponsiblefordelayinonlinesubmissionduetoanyreasons.

10. Scanned copy of cost of tender document in the shape of Treasury Challan / Receipt in favour of Executive Engineer PWD(R&B) Division QAZIGUND (The Date of Treasury Challan should be between the date of Start of Bid and Bid Submission End Date and EMD in the shape of CDR/FDR/BG pledged to Executive Engineer PWD(R&B) Division QAZIGUND must be uploaded with the documents of the bid. The Original Treasury Challan (Cost of Tender Document), EMD and other relevant bid documents shall be obtained from the lowest bidder before the fixation of the Contract.

11. Bidders are advised not to make any change in BOQ (Bill of Quantities) contents. In no case they should attempt to create similar BOQ manually.

12. Price escalation and taxes: The %age quoted by the bidder entirely in Indian Rupees, shall be deemed to include price escalation and all taxes up to completion of the work. Deduction on account of taxes shall be made from the bills of the contractor on gross amount of the bill as per the rates prevailing at the time of recovery.

**No: 5730-45 | Dated: 04-03-2026**

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

**DIPK: 11603/25 | Dated: 05-03-2026**



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# Women's Week Celebrations: Sports Day draws huge participation in Kathua

Women, girls from all age groups join district-wide competitions

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

**KATHUA, MARCH 05:** In continuation to Women's Week campaign, a dedicated multi-faceted celebration of International Women's Day organized by the District Administration Kathua, the Day 4, today, was observed as the Sports Day amid enthusiastic participation from women and girls. At the district headquarters, multiple sports events were organized at the Sports Stadium and the Indoor Sports Complex. Deputy Commissioner Rajesh Sharma presided over the event and appreciated the participants for turning up in large numbers and contributing to the success of the programme.

CPO Ranjeet Thakur; DSWO Varun Chaudhary; DYSSO Sunil Singh Sambyal and other concerned officers were also present.

"The week-long campaign has been designed to celebrate the achievements, resilience and contributions of women while also providing them a platform to come together, express themselves and inspire fellow women to actively participate in social, cultural and sporting activities," the Deputy



Commissioner said. He emphasized that such initiatives not only recognise the role of women in society but also encourage greater participation in public life, thereby fostering confidence, leadership and a spirit of healthy competition.

A cricket match between Kathua and Marheer teams was held at Sports Stadium, while other sports competitions, including tug of war, volleyball, badminton, table tennis, judo and taekwondo were held in the Indoor Sports Complex. Girls and women from different age groups turned up at the venue and actively participated in the games.

Tehsildar Nagri Aana Jamwal, who was the special guest, interacted with the participants and encouraged them to seize every opportunity to stay active and empowered in the society. She called upon the young athletes to adopt sports as an integral part of life, stating that participation in sports helps build discipline, confidence, teamwork and physical as well as mental well-being.

Similar sports events involving young girls and women were also organized at the sub-division level under the supervision of respective ADCs and SDMs.

## DHJ reviews progress of horticulture development initiatives in Samba district

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

**SAMBA, MARCH 05:** Director Horticulture Jammu (DHJ) Gul Syed today conducted an extensive tour of Samba district to review the progress of the Horticulture Development initiatives being implemented in the district.

The Director was accompanied by the Chief Horticulture Officer Jammu Anil Gorkha; Horticulture Development Officer Samba Varinder Sharma; Horticulture Development Officer Purmandal Rakesh Kumar and Horticulture Development Officer Vijaypur Manmohan Kumar, besides other functionaries of the department.



A review meeting was also held at the Government Fruit Plants Nursery Vijaypur where the Director assessed the overall performance and implementation of different horticulture schemes, including Mission for Integrated Development of Horticulture (MID), Jammu and Kashmir Competitiveness Improvement of Agriculture and Allied Sectors Project, Holistic Agriculture Development Programme (HADP) and Revised Modified High Density Plantation Scheme. He stressed upon field officers to ensure effective outreach of government programmes among the farming community.

Later, the Director inspected the strawberry plantations at Nanga in the Ramgarh area, belonging to the beneficiary Sanjay Verma. He expressed satisfaction and appreciation over the bumper crop of strawberries and encouraged the farmer to continue adopting modern horticulture practices for higher productivity and income.

The Director emphasized that diversification towards high-value crops like strawberries can significantly enhance farmers' income and further strengthen the horticulture sector in the region.

## Students rally taken out in Bhandarwah to promote anti-drug campaign

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

**BHANDARWAH, MARCH 05:** The Social Welfare Department Bhandarwah today organized an awareness rally by school students to promote the nationwide campaign - Nasha Mukht Bharat Abhiyaan.

A large number of students from Government Higher Secondary School (Boys) and Bhartiya Vidya Mandir participated in the rally. The students carried



banners and placards highlighting the ill effects of substance abuse and stressing the importance of building a drug-free society.

The rally passed through different parts of the town. The students raised slogans against drug abuse and appealed to the general public, particularly the youth, to stay away from narcotic substances and adopt a healthy lifestyle.

At the culmination of the rally, the participating students took a pledge to stay vigilant against drug abuse and actively spread awareness among peers and communities in support of the vision of a drug-free India.

## DC convenes public outreach camp at Dehari- Udhampur Listens to scores of public issues, demands

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

**UDHAMPUR, MARCH 05:** To take governance to the doorsteps of the people and expedite grievance redressal, the Deputy Commissioner Udhampur Minga Sherpa today convened a public outreach camp at Panchayat Ghar Dehari in Sub-Division Ramnagar.

Sub-Divisional Magistrate Swati Sheemar, Assistant Commissioner Development Om Parkash and the district officers of line departments attended the camp.

Former PRI members and a large number of locals from adjoining Panchayats raised several issues of public importance.

During the interaction, the local public projected several demands, seeking road connectivity from the



main road to Anshuman Kendra at Dehari, augmentation of water supply, up-gradation of High Schools to Higher Secondary Schools, sports stadiums at the Panchayat level, adequate teaching staff, reduction in power curtailment, compensation for flood victims, clearance and restoration of roads damaged due to floods, repair

of the Ramnagar Bus Stand, promotion of Pinla Mata and Chountra Mata as tourist destinations and employment opportunities for local youth.

Responding to the demands, the Deputy Commissioner assured them that all their genuine issues would be examined and addressed in a time-bound manner.

# MLA Bandipora reviews progress of works under Constituency Development Fund

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

**BANDIPORA, MARCH 05:** Member of Legislative Assembly (MLA) Bandipora, Nizam Ud Din Bhat today reviewed the progress and status of works being executed under the Constituency Development Fund (CDF) in Assembly Constituency Bandipora during a meeting held at the Mini Secretariat Bandipora.

During the meeting, the MLA took a detailed review of the status of works, including the number of works accorded, tendered, allotted and completed by various departments. The review covered works executed by Rural Development Department (RDD)

Bandipora, Municipal Committee Bandipora, JAKEDA, Education Department, Ground Water Division Srinagar, PHE Hydraulic Division Bandipora, Electric Division Bandipora/Sumbal, REW Bandipora, R&B Division Bandipora, District Youth Services & Sports Office, Block Development Offices of Arin, Aloosa, Bandipora, Bonakoot and Naidkhai, besides G&B Hostel Bandipora.

The MLA emphasized that unnecessary delays in execution of works must be avoided and stressed the need for timely completion of all projects sanctioned under the CDF. He directed the concerned officers to ensure that the ground staff



remains fully geared up to achieve maximum outcomes from the developmental works being undertaken. Highlighting the importance of public service delivery, the MLA said that public

welfare must remain the top priority while implementing development projects.

He further stressed that departments must work in close coordination with each other to

ensure smooth execution and effective implementation of works on the ground.

The meeting was attended by Chief Planning Officer Bandipora, Assistant Commissioner Development, Assistant Commissioner Panchayat, Executive Engineers of Ground Water Division Srinagar, PHE Hydraulic Division Bandipora, Electric Division Bandipora/Sumbal, REW Bandipora and R&B Division Bandipora, District Youth Services and Sports Officer Bandipora, Dy Chief Education Officer Bandipora, Block Development Officers of Arin, Aloosa, Bandipora, Bonakoot and Naidkhai, besides Warden C&B Hostel Bandipora.

## Awareness programme on PMEGP, JKREGP held at Nowshera

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

**NOWSHERA, MARCH 05:** Jammu & Kashmir Khadi and Village Industries Board (KVIB)- District Officer Rajouri today organized an awareness programme at Hanjana Khanka, Bareri Nowshera to promote self-employment schemes-the Prime Minister's Employment Generation Programme (PMEGP) and Jammu & Kashmir Employment Generation Programme (JKREGP).

Educated unemployed youth, aspiring entrepreneurs, artisans and members of the civil society were acquainted with self-



employment opportunities available under PMEGP and JKREGP schemes. District Officer KVIB Sameer Ahmed highlighted the objectives,

eligibility criteria, financial assistance pattern, margin money subsidy and application procedure for availing the benefits of the twin schemes.

Participants were informed about the scope of establishing income-generating units in manufacturing, service and business sectors. The importance of entrepreneurship development for sustainable livelihood generation and rural economic development was emphasized.

Detailed guidance was provided regarding online application procedures, documentation requirements and bank linkage for sanction of cases.

The programme concluded with an interactive session wherein the queries of the participants were addressed satisfactorily.

## PM SHRI School students visit University Campus Bhandarwah

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

**DODA, MARCH 05:** Chief Education Officer Doda, Bhushan Kumar Pathak today flagged off a group of students along with their escorting teachers from Government PM SHRI High School Kuddhar and PM SHRI Government High School Sooli, Zone Bhagwah, for an exposure visit to the University Campus and Radio Station Bhandarwah. The visit, organized under the PM SHRI Scheme, aimed to provide students with exposure to higher educational institutions and inspire them to pursue academic excellence. The students expressed great enthusiasm during the visit to university



campus and radio station where they had an opportunity to interact with faculty members, explore laboratories and libraries and gain valuable insights into various academic and media-related activities.



# Adani hikes LNG prices for industrial customers citing West Asia crisis

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

**MUMBAI, MAR 5 :** Adani Total Gas Ltd (ATGL) has issued notices to its industrial and commercial customers that it has raised the price of liquefied natural gas (LNG) from Rs 40 per standard cubic metre to Rs 119 per standard cubic metre, citing reduced supply constraints due to the ongoing war in West Asia.

"Due to recent geopolitical developments impacting LNG supply routes, ATGL has received upstream gas curtailment, leading to operational constraints," the company stated in a notice on Wednesday issued to its industrial customers whose consumption exceeds contracted usage limits.

The company's notice stated that gas tanker shipping transit through the Strait of Hormuz between Iran and Oman, which carries around



one-fifth of oil consumed globally as well as large quantities of liquefied natural gas (LNG) has ground to a near-halt after some vessels in the area were hit by missiles due to the war.

However, ATGL, which also supplies gas to more than 1.2 million households and operates nearly

1,100 CNG stations nationwide through its city gas distribution network, said that it has not hiked prices to its retail customers yet.

Meanwhile, according to ship tracking data available for March 5, 36 Indian-flagged ships are trapped in the Persian Gulf after Iran blockaded the Strait of Hormuz

through which approximately 20 per cent of the world's crude petroleum oil supply transits.

Of these vessels, six are crude petroleum oil tankers, one is a product oil tanker, 10 vessels are liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) carriers, one is a liquefied natural gas (LNG) carrier, three are container ships and two vessels are bulk carriers.

Out of these, two Indian-flagged vessels are navigating the Gulf of Aden, whereas none are transiting the highly volatile Red Sea, while seven of these ships belong to the government-run Shipping Corporation of India (SCI) headquartered in Mumbai.

According to ship tracking data, 12 of these ships are positioned east of the Strait of Hormuz and in the Gulf of Oman, while 24 ships are stalled west of the Strait of Hormuz. UNI

## Stock market ends higher amid strong buying

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

**NEW DELHI, MARCH 5 :** The Indian stock market on Thursday ended higher, supported by strong buying in key sectors like metals, infrastructure, energy and auto stocks.

At close, Sensex rose 900 points, or 1.14 per cent, at 80,015, while the Nifty gained 285 points, or 1.17 per cent, to settle at 24,765.

On Nifty, Adani Ports emerged as the top gainer, rising 4.52%, Larsen & Toubro gained 4.02%, Hindalco Industries climbed 3.60 %, NTPC rose 3.35% and Reliance Industries by 3.30%.

Further, Coal India also gained 3.27%, and Bharat Electronics, Shriram Finance, JSW Steel and InterGlobe Aviation advanced between about 2.7% and 2.9%.

On the losing side were Tech Mahindra, as the biggest loser, falling 1.32%. HCL Tech declined 0.73%, ICICI Bank by 0.57% and SBI fell by 0.43%. TCS, Hindustan Unilever, Eternal, ONGC, Axis Bank and ITC also closed marginally lower.

Among the sectors, Nifty Metal gained 2.21%, Consumer Durables surged 2%. Nifty Auto, Nifty Realty, Nifty Oil and Gas, Nifty Pharma, Nifty Chemicals, and Nifty Media, all closing with gains of over 1%.



Indian rupee strengthened ending at 91.60 per dollar, compared with 92.15 per dollar.

The market capitalisation of all listed companies on the BSE spiked to Rs 453 lakh crore during the trade from Rs 447 lakh crore in the previous session.

Stocks of major shipbuilding companies also posted healthy gains. Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders, Cochin Shipyard, and Garden Reach Shipbuilders closed with gains of 8.9%, 3.6%, and 4.4%, respectively.

Among the global markets, US stock futures signalled a weaker start, with Dow Jones Industrial Average futures falling 0.2% and S&P 500 futures slipping 0.1%.

Amid the escalating tensions in the Middle East, the Brent crude rose 1.8% to USD 82.87 per barrel. UNI

## MakeMyTrip acquires Flamingo Transworld, to strengthen holiday packages business

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

**GURUGRAM (HARYANA) MAR 5 :** MakeMyTrip, India's leading online travel company, Thursday announced an important acquisition of majority stake in Flamingo Transworld, a leading regional tour operating company, subject to the fulfilment of certain closing conditions.

The acquisition is aimed at strengthening the holiday packages business of the Nasdaq-listed online travel company.

Commenting on the acquisition, Rajesh Magow, Co-Founder and Group CEO, MakeMyTrip, said, "Flamingo aligns closely with the growth strategy of our Holiday Packages business. It is a strong, growing business that has developed a unique moat in the group travel domain. We plan to leverage the complementary customer base, products and distribution focus between the two brands to widen holiday package options for our customers."

Over the last 30 years of its operations, Flamingo has created a strong affinity in the regional markets of Gujarat, Maharashtra, Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh with its group tour services.

These tours are curated to make holidays a memorable experience and are particularly popular for having curated selection of Indian meals made by on-tour chefs or verified Indian vegetarian/Jain kitchens, in-house tour managers fluent in regional languages and extensive coverage of popular attractions and experiences for domestic and international tourists.

Flamingo's popular international and domestic group travel packages, which are currently sold largely through 51 offices across Gujarat, Maharashtra, Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh, will complement MakeMyTrip's established Holiday Packages business and help the platform penetrate deeper into markets across India.

Commenting on the development, Sanjay Shah, Director and Co-Founder of Flamingo Transworld, said, "For over three decades, Flamingo has built something unique in Indian travel, genuine trust. From chef-led tours to regional language guides, the brand has grown by going deeper. By combining Flamingo's brand equity and operational depth with MakeMyTrip's digital platform and national customer reach, we aim to build a truly pan-India tour company that brings Flamingo's signature experience to millions of new customers."

MakeMyTrip has taken a calibrated approach to inorganic growth, steadily strengthening its presence across key travel segments. Recent strategic acquisitions, including QuestToTravel in corporate travel bookings, Simplotel in hotel technology, BookMyForex in travel forex, Savaari in intercity mobility and Happay in corporate spend management, have expanded its capabilities across leisure, corporate and ancillary travel. These moves have enhanced supply integration, cross-sell potential, and end-to-end control across the connected trip journey, reinforcing MakeMyTrip's position as a full-stack travel services platform. We expect our proposed acquisition of Flamingo to further contribute to this growth. UNI

## South Indian Bank to offer loan against mutual funds to its customers

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

**CHENNAI, MARCH 5 :** Private mortgage lender South Indian Bank (SIB) on Thursday announced the launch of its digitally integrated Loan Against Mutual Funds (LAMF) offering, enabled by smallcase's technology infrastructure.

The partnership allows SIB to extend secured credit against mutual funds at an interest rate of 9.99 percent p.a., in compliance with regulatory guidelines, to both its existing customer base and to customers of digital wealth platforms through its Lending Service Provider (LSP) network.

Using smallcase's secured credit stack, SIB has built a native, API-led integration that enables an

end-to-end digital journey for the user that includes pledging, disbursal, and release of mutual fund units.

With this launch, SIB becomes among the first banks to offer a fully integrated LAMF solution to its LSP partners, enabling digital ecosystems and fintech apps to embed secured credit seamlessly within their offerings.

"At South Indian Bank, expanding access to responsible and transparent credit solutions is central to our priorities. Our partnership with smallcase enables us to offer a Loan Against Securities offering on mutual funds in a fully digital workflow, making credit more accessible to investors. We are looking forward to expanding this to demat securities and other



financial assets, and are also working with multiple digital platforms to unlock innovative use cases," said Sony A, SGM & Chief Information Officer, SIB.

On the integration with SIB, Vasanth Kamath, Founder and CEO, smallcase, said, "At smallcase, we

build technology platforms that enable financial institutions to offer investment and wealth products digitally. We are excited about enabling South Indian Bank's LAMF offering across its properties and partners, including the smallcase ecosystem. We strongly

believe that secured credit is a key part of every investor's toolkit to avail access to instant liquidity in a flexible and cost-effective manner."

Built as a modular, API-first infrastructure layer, smallcase's secured credit stack enables banks and regulated lenders to launch loans against securities products across multiple distribution channels, including their own customer base and third-party digital wealth platforms.

The solution covers digital onboarding, pledge workflows and management, monitoring, and release mechanisms within a compliance-aligned framework, allowing financial institutions to scale secured lending efficiently. UNI

## West Asia tensions raise risks to global energy supply: Goldman Sachs

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

**NEW DELHI, MARCH 5 :** A spike in risks to global energy supply chains is anticipated amid the escalating tensions in West Asia linked to the conflict involving Iran, particularly around the strategic Strait of Hormuz, said a report by Goldman Sachs.

The waterway remains one of the most critical chokepoints in global energy trade, with roughly one-fifth of the world's oil supply and a significant share of liquefied natural gas (LNG) shipments passing through the strait, the report noted.

The Goldman Sachs report highlighted that nearly 20 million barrels per day of oil supply and about 19 per cent of global LNG trade typically transit the route, making it vital for energy-importing nations, especially in Asia. Countries such as China, India, Japan, and South Korea depend heavily on shipments that pass through the strait.

Goldman Sachs said tanker traffic in the region has already shown early signs of disruption, with shipping companies, oil producers, and insurers adopting a cautious stance following



reports of damaged vessels. Some ships are also avoiding the route amid rising security concerns.

Markets have already begun factoring in geopolitical risks. According to the report, oil prices currently include an estimated risk premium of around USD 18 per barrel, reflecting the potential impact if flows through the Strait of Hormuz were halted for about a month. This estimate accounts for the limited alternative pipeline capacity that could bypass the strait.

Even without direct damage to oil infrastructure, disruptions to maritime shipping alone could significantly affect supply chains. Goldman Sachs estimates that around 16 million barrels per day of oil flows could be exposed in the event of a full closure of the strait.

The risks also extend to natural

gas markets. Approximately 80 million tonnes per year of LNG exports, largely from Qatar, pass through the strait. A sustained disruption could tighten global gas supplies and potentially push European benchmark gas prices back to levels seen during the 2022 energy crisis.

Recent developments in the region have already slowed tanker movements and led to sharp increases in shipping insurance premiums and freight rates. Some vessels have reportedly begun avoiding the region, raising concerns about broader supply disruptions.

While global oil inventories and spare production capacity may provide a short-term buffer, the report warned that prolonged disruptions in the Gulf could trigger significant volatility in global energy markets and push up prices of oil, gas, and refined products.

Market participants and policymakers are now closely monitoring tanker traffic through the Strait of Hormuz as well as diplomatic and military signals from the United States, Iran, and Gulf nations to assess whether the situation remains temporary or evolves into a broader energy supply shock.

## Women increasingly taking charge of financial decisions independently: Report

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

**NEW DELHI, MARCH 5 :** Women are increasingly taking charge of their financial decisions, even as a widening gap is emerging between investor confidence and structured financial planning, said a report released on Thursday.

The report 'DSP Winvestor Pulse 2025-26' said about 56pc of women now take investment decisions independently which was 44pc in 2022. On the other hand, men continued to lead the race with 68pc participation.

The findings, which were released in partnership with YouGov, said the acceleration among the partnership of women shows structural change rather than just incremental participation.

"Nearly one in four women

(24pc in 2025 vs 17pc in 2022) say they take completely independent decisions in consultation with a professional advisor," it said.

The report also highlighted a striking paradox that 84pc of investors across genders say they feel confident making their own investment decisions, while only 33pc report having both a clear financial goal and a structured plan to achieve it.

"Over the years, we have seen Indian women move from participation to ownership in their financial journeys. What stands out in this edition of Winvestor Pulse is not just the rise in independent decision-making, but the rise in informed independence," said Aditi Kothari Desai, Chairperson of DSP Mutual Funds.

"Women are seeking knowledge,



engaging with markets, consulting advisors, and shaping aspirations on their own terms. For us at DSP, this reinforces the importance of building an ecosystem rooted in trust, transparency, and long-term partnership," said the chairperson of DSP Mutual Funds.

Trust in financial advice also reported a surge, as about 94pc

of those who consult financial advisors report satisfaction, and most investors still do not use financial advisors.

The report findings also showed a gap in intergenerational dynamics as 45pc of women express strong confidence in leaving a financial legacy compared to 41pc of men. Artificial Intelligence, which

is now emergent in most sectors, evokes cautious interest in investments as 46pc of respondents raised concern for data privacy.

Sharing some information about the report, Kalpen Parekh, MD and CEO of Mutual Fund, said, "Every three years, the Winvestor Pulse survey serves as a mirror -- helping us track progress and spark deeper conversations across the community of wealth managers and investors about empowering women to take charge of their financial decisions."

Parekh said the message is simple: when women invest with confidence, families become more secure and long-term outcomes improve. "Financial independence is not optional -- it is foundational to dignity, resilience, and wealth creation," Parekh added.





# Samson finally takes centre stage, and the wait has been worth it

■ UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

**KOLKATA:** Sanju Samson said this in May 2022, on the YouTube show Breakfast With Champions. He had just been dropped from India's T20I squad for a series against South Africa, and in effect been told he wasn't in the selectors' plans for that year's T20 World Cup. He had been dropped after scoring 39 off 25 and 18 off 12 in his last two T20Is. He had been dropped in the middle of a typical IPL season for him: he was among the top ten run-getters and had the third-highest strike rate of the ten, but he was the only one of them with a sub-30 average.

In May 2022, the world of Indian T20 cricket wasn't what it is today. In that world, Samson's statement could be read as a challenge and a provocation. Uttered today, his words would lack the charge they then possessed. Today, it's how most of the world views T20. When he made that statement, Samson was 27, a man who had batted like the T20 batter of 2026 for most of his career. He was in his tenth IPL season, and the captain of his franchise. He was a superstar who had barely made a dent in international cricket, or had the chance to, having played just 12 T20Is and one ODI. Samson's profile still begins with this sentence: "Sanju Samson was perhaps the first top-drawer Indian player to be known primarily for his feats for his IPL franchise than for the national side."

The profile probably needs an update, but that sentence still rings true, even if Indian cricket, in the months and years since May 2022, has gradually found a place in its heart for Samson. Indian cricket has caught up with him - slowly and painfully at first, and then

at a pace so bewildering that it can sometimes appear to have overtaken him.

When India won the T20 World Cup in 2024, Samson spent the entire tournament on the bench. He had had to wait a long time, and his time hadn't yet come, but it seemed imminent. At the start of this T20 World Cup, he seemed once more in danger of spending all of it on the bench, this time at 31. In the squad, out of form, not in the first XI, and without a clear way back in given the way the rest of the batters were performing.

He also no longer offered a point of difference in terms of approach. In broad terms, pretty much every India batter now batted like him, aiming to be in for a good time, not a long time. And Samson's younger colleagues hadn't had to fight the establishment to make their point: not to the degree he had had to. The establishment now understood the trade-offs that allowed a rare and precious talent like Abhishek Sharma to score as quickly as he did. The establishment of 2026, to put it simply, would never drop a batter like that simply for scoring three successive ducks.

A batter on the inside would now need to go through a prolonged rough patch, and provide reasons beyond mere low scores, to find himself on the outside.

In the year leading up to this World Cup, Samson happened to go through two such patches. First, in a home series against England, he kept getting out to fast, short bowling against an attack unusually good at that mode of bowling. That, perhaps, contributed to India recalling Shubman Gill at the top of the order and unsettling Samson, pushing him into an unfamiliar middle-order role initially, and then dropping him for Jitesh

Sharma, a keeper more at home in that role.

Then, after India went back to their earlier team structure, with Gill and Jitesh out and Samson re-established as opener, he went through a horror run - he was, to borrow Suryakumar Yadav's pet expression, not just out of runs but out of form too - with the World Cup imminent. And he went through it just when another player fitting his exact job description, Ishan Kishan, was in the form of his life.

Unlike so many times in the past, Samson wasn't on the outside because the establishment didn't trust him. He was on the outside because others who could do what he does happened to be doing it better at the time. Indian cricket had caught up with Samson. And it appeared to have overtaken him.

Sometimes, though, fate intervenes in the oddest of ways. If Samson didn't offer a point of difference in terms of how he batted, he did at a more basic level: in the way he stood at the crease. In a time of left-handed excess, and at a time when that excess was causing India problems, he offered the virtue of right-handedness. And if that still wasn't enough of a reason for India to slot him back in, a space opened up because of external circumstances.

On Sunday at Eden Gardens, breathing air rich in comebacks and fairytales, Samson met the moment he had dreamed of all his life. He was playing his 328th T20 game; only ten Indian players - Rohit Sharma (463), Dinesh Karthik (415), Virat Kohli (414), MS Dhoni (405), Suryakumar (358), Ravindra Jadeja (346), Suresh Raina (336), Shikhar Dhawan (334), R Ashwin (333), Yuzvendra Chahal (329) - had played as many. He had, by many measures, proved himself at international level; only four batters have bettered his three T20I hundreds.

## Maxwell hopeful of playing more T20I cricket for Australia

■ UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

**COLOMBO:** Glenn Maxwell says he is hopeful of playing more T20I cricket for Australia and has not put a finishing date on his career with the 2028 Olympics and T20 World Cup not ruled out.

Maxwell, 37, will be 40 by the time Australia host the T20 World Cup in 2028 with the LA Olympics to take place a few months earlier. He has signed a two-year deal to continue playing in the BBL with Melbourne Stars until then and will also play in the upcoming PSL and MLC this year as well as the new Europe-based T20 league later in the year where he is a part-owner of one of the new franchises.

But Australia's failure to progress beyond the group stage at the T20 World Cup and Maxwell's recent form has raised questions about his future, with Ricky Ponting believing Maxwell will not be part of Australia's team in 2028. Maxwell has already retired from ODI cricket and looks set to lose his CA contract as Australia only have eight bilateral T20Is on the calendar before August 2027. But he wants to continue playing and won't make



any decisions on his future in the short term. "I think not making a decision around my future was probably based more on what's to come over the next 12 months," Maxwell told reporters on Wednesday in Melbourne. "There's not a whole lot of T20 cricket planned, so there's probably no need to make any sort of formal announcements, and just see how my body's going and see how I'm travelling and if there's opportunities to play in the future, hopefully I'm fit and firing." Maxwell was asked specifically about whether he thought he could play at the Olympics and the T20 World Cup in 2028 and whether his body and his form could hold up.

## Tennis world rocked by Middle East war as Indian Wells begins

■ UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

**INDIAN WELLS:** With top players stranded in the Middle East by war and a tournament scrapped due to falling drone shrapnel, the glamorous globe-trotting world of tennis has not been spared the "brutal" reality of recent events, stars said at Indian Wells on Tuesday.

Dozens of international tennis players are gathering this week on the opposite side of the world in the California desert for the prestigious annual men's and women's tournaments that begin Wednesday.

Currently absent are the likes of Daniil Medvedev and Andrey Rublev, who have been trying to leave Dubai since Saturday, with thousands of flights from the Middle East canceled due to Iranian missiles and drones.

British star Jack Draper told reporters in Indian Wells that he had been in Dubai last week and "managed to get away almost probably one of the last flights out." "I just hope the players and all the staff within the ATP are able to make it here, or the main thing is that they're safe."

"It's obviously a very concerning situation for all involved, and

I hope they can make it here."

At least two tournaments in the United Arab Emirates were canceled after play was interrupted due to drone strikes on nearby refineries, with falling debris from the interception of a drone causing a fire in an oil field.

Simultaneously a major tennis tournament in Acapulco, Mexico starring the likes of Alexander Zverev went ahead last week even as the recent killing of a drug lord triggered deadly violence across the country.

"It's brutal to think about some of that," said American star Ben Shelton, who like many play-

ers at Indian Wells has friends "stuck" in the Middle East.

"We talk about it all the time... it is something that's on all of our minds," he told a press conference. The US and Israel on Saturday launched strikes on Tehran that killed supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and other senior Iranian figures, followed by days of air and missile raids. Iran's armed forces responded with aerial attacks on Israel, US embassies and military bases and on its Arab neighbors around the Gulf.

A small number of players at the Dubai ATP 500 were unable

to leave, as the men's and women's global tours shift to California for the Masters and WTA 1000 in Indian Wells. ATP, the men's tour's governing body, did not immediately respond to AFP request for comment after a Russian media report said Medvedev and Rublev had eventually been able to leave the Middle East via Oman.

"The health, safety and well-being of our players, staff and tournament personnel is our priority... We are in direct communication with those affected," the ATP had said in an earlier statement on social media.

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YOUR WORDS CAN INSPIRE,  
INFORM, AND IGNITE; LET  
THEM BE HEARD.

